THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF INDONESIA 1945–1946

Britain, the Netherlands and the Indonesian revolution

Richard McMillan

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THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF INDONESIA 1945–1946

This is the first work to systematically examine the British occupation of Indonesia after the Second World War. The occupation by British-Indian forces between 1945 and 1946 bridged the gap between the surrender of Japan and the resumption of Dutch rule, and this book is a reappraisal of the conduct on the ground of that British occupation. Contrary to previous studies, this book demonstrates that the occupation was neither exclusively pro-Dutch nor pro-Indonesian; nor was it the orderly affair portrayed in the British official histories.

Richard McMillan draws upon a wide range of sources previously unavailable to scholars – such as recently declassified government papers and papers in private archives; he has also carried out revealing interviews with key players. Presenting a wealth of new information, this highly original – and well-written – book will appeal to scholars of European Imperialism, the Second World War, military history and the history of South and Southeast Asia. It will also be relevant to a wide range of undergraduate courses in History.

Richard McMillan received his Ph.D. in History from Royal Holloway, University of London. He is currently teaching History and Government and Politics at Lansdowne College, London, and Imperial History at Royal Holloway, University of London.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2005
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

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This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
McMillan, Richard, 1975–
The British Occupation of Indonesia, 1945–1946 : Britain, the Netherlands and the Indonesian revolution / Richard McMillan.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
1. Indonesia–History–British occupation, 1765–1947. I. Title.
DS643.M3655 2005
959.803´5–dc22
2005002947

ISBN 0–415–35551–6 (Print Edition)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first of all like to thank Professor A. J. Stockwell of Royal Holloway, University of London, who supervised the Ph.D. thesis on which this book is based. Both he and my Advisor, Dr. Matthew Jones, provided much help, advice and encouragement. I would also like to thank the Staff of London University Library, the London Library, the British Library, The National Archives at Kew, the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives at King's College, London, the Bodleian Library, Oxford and the Cambridge University Libraries. For permission to quote from or use materials in their possession, I would like to thank the following organizations: the Photograph Archive and the Department of Documents of the Imperial War Museum, the Department of Documents at the National Army Museum, Her Majesty's Stationery Office and the Conservative Party Archives. In addition, I would like to thank the many protagonists who were involved in the occupation of Indonesia for sharing their recollections with me. I would also like to thank all those in Indonesia who made me welcome when I visited their country. Finally, I would like to thank Dr T. N. Harper of Magdalene College, Cambridge, who first suggested to me this subject.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	aide-de-camp
ADCS	Anglo-Dutch Country Section
AFNEI	Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies
ALFSEA	Allied Land Forces Southeast Asia
ALF(S)	Allied Land Forces (Sumatra)
APWI	Allied prisoners-of-war and internees
BIO	Brigade Intelligence Officer
BO	British Officer
BOR	British other rank
BM	Brigade Major
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CO	Commanding Officer
COS	Chiefs of Staff
CRA	Commander Royal Artillery
DMO	Director of Military Operations
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
FIC	French Indochina
FSO	Field Security Officer
G 2 (I Pol)	General Staff Officer Grade 2 in charge of political intelligence
GHQ	general headquarters
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOC-in-C	General Officer Commander-in-Chief
GOR	Gurkha other rank
GS	General Staff
GSO I	General Staff Officer Grade 1 (senior British staff officer)
HMG	His Majesty's Government (British)
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
INA	Indian National Army (formed of Indian Army prisoners-of-war and Indian civilians to fight against the British under overall command of the Japanese)
IO	Intelligence Officer

IOR	Indian other rank
IT	Indian troops
JPS	Joint Planning Staff
JSP	Japanese surrendered personnel
KNIL	Koninklijk Nederlands–Indisch Leger (Royal Netherlands Indian Army)
LMG	light machine-gun
LRJR	Laskar Rakyat Jakarta Raya (People's Militia of Greater Jakarta)
MLI	Mahratta Light Infantry
MMG	medium machine-gun
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NEI	Netherlands East Indies
NICA	Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Organization
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province of India
OBE	Order of the British Empire
OC	Officer Commanding (the same as CO – Commanding Officer)
PAVO	Prince Albert Victor's Own (Cavalry regiment in the Indian Army. By the time of its deployment in Java, it had gone over to using tanks.)
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Party)
POPDA	Panita Oentoek Pengambalian Tentara Jepang dan Asing (Indonesian Republican Organization: 'Committee for the Return of Japanese Military Personnel and Other Foreigners')
POW	prisoner-of-war
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAFNEI	Royal Air Force Netherlands East Indies
RAPWI	repatriation of Allied prisoners-of-war and internees
RIR	Royal Indies Regiment
RN	Royal Navy
RNIA	Royal Netherlands Indian Army (Koninklijk Nederlands–Indisch Leger: KNIL)
SACSEA	Supreme Allied Commander Southeast Asia
SEAC	Southeast Asia Command
SWPA	Southwest Pacific Area
TKR	Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (People's Security Army – official Indonesian army)
TNA	The National Archives, formerly the Public Record Office, London
TRI	Tentara Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Republican Army, formerly the TKR)
VCO	Viceroy's-Commissioned Officer
VD	venereal disease
WIS	Weekly Intelligence Summary
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

INTRODUCTION

In 1941 and 1942 the Japanese war machine swept all before it in a series of rapid conquests in Southeast Asia and the Pacific that made Japan the master of the entire region. The American fleet was badly mauled at Pearl Harbor, the British battleships HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse* were sunk; the Philippines, Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, Hong Kong and most of Burma were taken. Darwin was bombed.

The British, Americans and their allies were ill-prepared. On land, they were no match for the Japanese armies, battle-hardened since 1931. At sea, they were powerless in the face of the Japanese navy. Throughout the region, prisoners of war and civilians were herded into camps where they were starved and ill-treated. The Japanese purpose was to humiliate 'the white man' in view of the indigenous peoples of the region and to make clear that the days of European domination were over.

The Netherlands East Indies, as Indonesia was then known, were no exception to this general rule of conquest and humiliation. The Dutch had been there since the beginning of the seventeenth century. Though they had developed the territory economically, indigenous Indonesians seldom saw the benefit. For the most part, they lived in a state of underdevelopment. In common with other colonial territories in the region, nationalist parties had come into existence at the beginning of the century but were suppressed. By the end of the 1930s, the Dutch were firmly in control. Their weakness was that they had neglected the defence of the Indies from external attack. They had viewed Singapore as an impregnable fortress beyond which no aggressor could advance. When Singapore fell, the Japanese were able to advance.[1]

The Indies capitulated to the Japanese in March 1942. Prisoners of war and male civilians were interned at once. Among these were the Ambonese and Menadonese troops of the Royal Netherlands Indian Army who had proved more effective in suppressing Indonesian nationalists than in defending the territory against the Japanese. Women and children, mainly Dutch, were interned in separate camps six months later. The residential district of Batavia – modern day Jakarta – became a vast camp.[2] Prisoners of war and many indigenous people were made to

undertake manual labour elsewhere in the region, such as the Burma railway.[3] In the camps, European women and children were engaged on easier camp duties but in poor living conditions. There was little food, poor sanitation and overcrowding. Disease became endemic and many died.[4] The non-European inhabitants of the Indies retained their freedom but little else. The Japanese disrupted the canal system constructed by the Dutch upon which agriculture depended. The population was near starvation and sanitation broke down.[5] On arrival, the Japanese released the most prominent pre-war nationalist leaders from captivity and incorporated them into their administration. It was they who had to carry out Japanese projects for the compulsory requisitioning of rice and the rounding up of their fellow countrymen for forced labour overseas.[6] The Japanese also trained up Indonesian youths, organizing them into para-military groups whose purpose was to seek out Allied spies and resist an Allied invasion.[7] Contact between the Indies and the outside world was virtually nil. Hardly any covert operations were undertaken in the territory by the Allied special forces. Those that were met with no indigenous co-operation, in contrast to operations elsewhere, such as Malaya, where co-operation was readily offered.[8] In truth, the Indies were far removed from either the British sphere of operations in Burma or the American sphere, in the Pacific.

By early 1945, the Allies had had many successes in the war against Japan and an American attack on Japan itself was imminent. The Indies were, formally, part of General MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area but, in view of American commitments towards Japan, came to be seen as a burden. Accordingly, the American Chiefs of Staff requested in April 1945 that the Indies, along with French Indochina south of the 16th parallel, become the responsibility of the British Southeast Asia Command. For the time being, nothing came of this suggestion. The request was renewed at the Potsdam Conference in July. Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander Southeast Asia, asked for time to consider, as the transfer would throw a considerable strain on the resources of his command. When Japan surrendered, Mountbatten was informed that the transfer would take place at once.[9]

The acquisition of any one of the new territories would have posed a challenge; the acquisition of all imposed an almost unbearable strain on the resources of the command during the months ahead. In 1930, the last census of the Dutch administration revealed the population of the Indies at over 60 million, an increase of 23 per cent over the previous decade. In 1940, the population was thought to be over 70 million, of whom almost 50 million lived in Java and Madura. Java, where the British came to concentrate their efforts, was, according to an American academic who wrote on the Indies during the inter-war period, 'among the most densely populated areas of the earth'.[10] There were over 68,000 prisoners of war and internees on Java and over 13,000 on Sumatra.[11] The vast majority of prisoners of war and internees were Dutch civilians. The Japanese 16th Army, numbering over 70,000 men, was on Java; 25th Army, of the same strength, was on Sumatra.[12] It fell to XV Indian Corps, whose strength was approximately 45,000 fighting men, to locate, rescue and, in some cases, repatriate the prisoners of war and

internees and to disarm and repatriate the Japanese. And all this in the middle of the national revolution of one of the most populous territories on earth.

There was little that Mountbatten could do in the immediate future. The tasks entrusted to him were the rehabilitation and, if necessary, repatriation of Allied prisoners of war and internees, the disarming and repatriation of the Japanese and the maintenance of 'law and order'. General MacArthur requested that Mountbatten await the formal surrender of the Japanese in Tokyo Bay on 2 September before deploying his forces beyond Burma. Only then was Mountbatten free to carry out the landings on the coast of Malaya, originally planned as an offensive operation, move south and set up a base at Singapore. He was then able to deploy forces in Java and Sumatra. With so many commitments elsewhere, in Burma, Siam, Malaya and southern Indochina, the forces available to him would have to be thinly spread.[13] The first formation of 23rd Indian Division, 1st Seaforth Highlanders, did not arrive in Batavia until the end of September, six weeks after the Japanese surrender. Events in the Indies during this period were radically to affect the nature of the British occupation, the reinstatement of Dutch power and the course of Indonesian history.

Throughout the war in Asia, the Japanese, in order to secure their position in the countries they occupied, set up nominally independent administrations. These had the double advantage of allowing much of the administrative work of government to be devolved onto local shoulders and of making the Japanese appear as the grantors of independence to local peoples. Such administrations were set up in Manchukuo, in Nangking, in China proper, in the Philippines and in Burma; there was even an Indian administration to run the Andaman and Nicobar Islands under Subhas Chandra Bose.

A few days before the surrender of Japan in August 1945, the Japanese in Java let it be known that they were to grant independence to Indonesia. Plans were well advanced by the time of the surrender. The principal Indonesian leaders, Sukarno and Hatta, pressed by the militant youth movement, then took matters into their own hands. Indonesian independence was proclaimed in Batavia on 17 August. Sukarno and Hatta were inaugurated as, respectively, the Republic of Indonesia's President and Vice-President.[14] Support for the Republic was vocal and massive, most notably in the towns and chiefly among the Indonesian youth, the *pemuda*. A government was rapidly set up with a police force and an army under its control. Radio stations broadcast the Republic's existence to the world.[15] The Japanese response was often apathetic: some units retreated into the hills with arms and supplies; others allowed themselves to be disarmed. Some units actively collaborated with the new Indonesian forces.[16] The acquisition by Indonesian forces, regular and irregular, of large quantities of Japanese weapons was significant.

Simultaneously, there was an upsurge of anti-European feeling. Often, those Dutch internees who left the camps to settle back into their homes or businesses were brutally murdered. Those who remained were guarded by the Japanese.[17] Headquarters Southeast Asia Command, slow at first to take on board the significance of events, eventually realized that the reinstatement of the Dutch as

legitimate sovereign power would not be welcomed. Accordingly, Mountbatten modified earlier plans for reoccupation agreed with the Dutch. Rather than assert their presence throughout Java and Sumatra in anticipation of a territory-wide resumption of Dutch control, the British decided that they would confine their occupation to certain key areas, mainly the port cities, from which they would mount operations into the interior only when necessary. Without significant forces of their own, there was little the Dutch could do.[18]

It is worth noting differences of outlook between the British and Dutch. By 1945, both Southeast Asia Command and the British Government could claim a relatively progressive record on imperial and colonial questions. In Burma, Mountbatten and General Slim had dealt pragmatically with Aung San and the Patriotic Burmese Forces, both men being alive to the spirit of nationalism in the region.[19] In Malaya, a radical new scheme was afoot for a Malayan Union with common citizenship between Malays and non-Malays, such as Chinese and Indians, and a reduction in the powers of the Malay Sultans.[20] India had been promised independence, although the precise details were still a matter of debate.[21] The Dutch, by contrast, had been defeated by the Germans within days in May 1940 and had then suffered occupation. In a similarly short period, in March 1942, resistance to the Japanese invasion of the Indies had collapsed. They had had no plans for Indonesian self-government before the war and were in no mood for discussion with Sukarno and Hatta, whom they regarded as war criminals and collaborators, even Japanese-inspired fascists.[22] The question of greater autonomy for the Indies, possibly even a form of independence, had, however, been raised by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands in a broadcast of 6 December 1942 in which she outlined plans for the creation of a Commonwealth of the Netherlands after the war. The Indies were to form a part of this Commonwealth. Each part, she said, 'will participate, with complete self-reliance and freedom of conduct … regarding its internal affairs, but with readiness to render mutual assistance.'[23]

As they deployed their meagre forces in the key areas of Java and Sumatra, the British soon found themselves in a quandary. They ran into considerable Indonesian opposition, most notably at Surabaya in East Java. Indonesians believed, correctly, that the British were restoring control in the key areas on behalf of the Dutch. With British occupation of the ports, the reintroduction by the Dutch of their armed forces would be easy. The only solution, if Indonesian independence were to be preserved, was to eject the British. This policy very nearly succeeded at Surabaya, where a Brigade was decimated. Only the timely introduction of reinforcements enabled the British to reoccupy the city by force. Clashes with Indonesian forces, on whatever scale, disturbed the British. If the Dutch could be brought to negotiate with the leaders of the Indonesian Republic, they reasoned, and publicly to pronounce a liberal policy, Indonesian fears might abate and their own mission be made easier.

Meetings between Dutch and Indonesians did take place under the auspices of General Christison, the Commander Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies. Christison was well-intentioned but did not possess much political acumen. Little

was achieved apart from his own dismissal in January 1946 following a series of blunders in the political arena which embarrassed Mountbatten.[24] The following month, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr arrived in Java. A former Ambassador to China and the Soviet Union, Clark Kerr was a diplomat of unimpeachable credentials but as a peacemaker between the Dutch and Indonesians he was ineffective. He superintended the despatch to the Netherlands of an Indonesian delegation, but negotiations broke down in the face of an intransigent Dutch Government.[25] The only British figure who can be credited with advancing Dutch–Indonesian understanding is Lord Killearn. British Ambassador in Cairo during the war, Killearn then became the Special Commissioner in Southeast Asia. His remit was the economic rehabilitation of the region which was suffering from food shortages. He arrived in Java in August 1946, when it was announced by the British Government that their troops would leave the Indies by late November, irrespective of whether a political understanding had been reached. Both Dutch and Indonesians now negotiated with a sense of urgency, the Dutch fearful of antagonizing the British who controlled the Batavia bridgehead and Sumatra, the Indonesians fearful of being abandoned to the Dutch before they had committed themselves to a political undertaking.[26]

An agreement known as the Linggadjati Agreement was initialed by both Dutch and Indonesians at Batavia on 15 November 1946. It accepted the existence, though not the legality, of the Indonesian Republic in Java, Madura and Sumatra and provided for a federal United States of Indonesia to act in partnership with the Netherlands under the Dutch Crown.[27] A fortnight later, the British left the Indies. The limited political progress achieved came too late to have any beneficial effect on the conduct of the British occupation. A glance at the War Diaries of any battalion stationed in the Indies throughout the occupation reveals constant fighting between British and Indonesian forces. To describe the occupation on the ground as 15 months of wanton violence would be no exaggeration.

The historiography of this period is dominated by literature on Indonesian nationalism, largely written by American scholars. George McTurnan Kahin's work, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, published in 1952, and Benedict Anderson's study, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944–1946*, published in 1972, are both rightly regarded as classics.[28] Also noteworthy is the work of Anthony Reid, an Australian scholar, on the Indonesian national revolution and on the 'Social Revolution' which took place in northern Sumatra in 1946.[29] It would be unfair to say that these writers portray the British as acting 'hand-in-glove' with the Dutch. They highlight the dilemmas faced by Southeast Asia Command in having to discharge its obligations to its Dutch allies whilst dealing with the reality of Indonesian Republican power. Yet there is often a hostile edge to descriptions of British military operations. British actions are presented as part of a neo-colonial conspiracy to restore Dutch power. This was how the radical Indonesian press portrayed British actions at the time. In using such sources, these scholars have not achieved any real measure of detachment.

Anderson describes the British occupation of Surabaya in November 1945 as a 'counterstroke of revenge' for the death of Brigadier Mallaby. He states that, because all the European internees who wanted to leave had done so by the time of the occupation, 'the British were unable convincingly to claim humanitarian objectives for their assault on Surabaja'.[30] In point of fact, there were around 3,500 internees still in Indonesian-occupied Surabaya and it was on their behalf that the operation was launched.[31] The British occupation of south Bandung at the end of March 1946 is seen by Anderson as a prelude to the handing over of the city to the Dutch:

> On March 24 the city had to be evacuated by republican forces, who put the areas hitherto under their control to the torch.
>
> The fall of Bandung was a serious military and psychological blow to the government. It was also a portent of things to come. By April 17 the British had turned the city over to the Dutch …[32]

No mention is made of the actions of irregular Indonesian forces that impelled the British to move into the south of the city; nor is it pointed out that the British were obliged to restore an area such as Bandung to the Dutch on account of the large number of Dutch internees concentrated there.

A similar attitude is to be found in Kahin's work. When he describes why Indonesian professionals and civil servants, victims of Communist-led violence in January 1946 before the establishment of Indonesian Republican authority in the area, collaborated with the Dutch after the British departure, he says:

> Because of their bitterness at this, and because of the fact that it was some months before Republican authority was well established in the area, a number of these persons cast their lot with the Netherlands authorities then ensconced behind British bayonets in the sector of the residency capital and port of Medan then occupied by the British.[33]

Kahin appears to forget that in any revolutionary situation not all the indigenous population are of one mind. He overestimates the extent to which this is due to external forces.

Anthony Reid, similarly, often portrays the British presence in northern Sumatra in negative terms, ascribing to it an offensive role. He portrays British clashes with Indonesian armed groups outside the Medan perimeter as if these groups were acting to defend themselves from a systematic British plan of expansion. No such plan existed. Of one patrol clash, he observes:

> This was the first pitched battle in which the pemuda used their newly acquired weapons and it confirmed Indonesian determination to restrict the Allied operations to Medan. The British appear to have accepted this message … On 13 December [Brigadier] Kelly defined an area 8½km

> beyond the Medan and Belawan city boundaries, within which anyone carrying arms would be shot on sight.[34]

Reid fails to take into consideration that the British remit was not to crush the forces of Indonesian nationalism but to occupy key areas, in this case Medan and its port, from which to round up internees and Japanese Surrendered Personnel. It is hardly surprising that they sought to avoid fruitless military engagements outside the immediate vicinity of Medan.

Another category of literature is that of the British official histories of the Second World War, represented by F. S. V. Donnison's study, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943–46*, published in 1956, and Volume V of Major-General Woodburn Kirby's work, *The War Against Japan*, published in 1969, entitled *The Surrender of Japan*.[35] A weakness of both of these works is that the British occupation of Indonesia is seen as a 'campaign', an adjunct to the Second World War, and not a peacetime mission. Both take a pro-British stance and avoid the murkier aspects of the intervention, which today would be termed 'violations of human rights'. To this category can be added Mountbatten's retrospective account of the British post-war mission in Southeast Asia, Section E of the *Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff*.[36] The British occupation of Indonesia is here portrayed as an orderly, enlightened and impartial episode. Mountbatten was notorious as a self-publicist and this account is no exception.

A work in neither genre is by Professor Gerbrandy, the wartime Prime Minister of the Dutch Government-in-exile in London, entitled *Indonesia*, published in 1950. Gerbrandy believes that the British stabbed the Dutch in the back by drastically limiting the scope of their military activities and by treating with Indonesian leaders, local and national. Typically, he states:

> British policy was the primary, if not the sole, cause of the collapse of the once stable kingdom of the Netherlands. That much is incontrovertible. A considerable measure of blame attaches to some of our own people, but if the British had taken determined military measures throughout, their meddling in the political sphere would never have been called for.[37]

What the literature has in common is that it treats the British occupation force as a monolithic whole with a settled *modus operandi*. No attempt is made to portray the occupation force as a living thing, affected by events, composed of individuals who felt keenly the tensions of the situation and differed concerning the appropriate action to be taken in response to specific issues. It is this gap in the literature which the present study fills. It examines the British occupation force itself, the reasons for its presence in the Indies, its composition, its conduct, and the feelings of the participants about what they were being called upon to do. Until now, much has been claimed about the occupation by writers who have not used British archives systematically and who have a fixed political or ideological agenda. The present author has had full access to British archives and other sources in the United

Kingdom and has had no such agenda. The conduct of the occupation force on the ground will be examined in the context of the 'myths', outlined above, which continue to surround the subject.

A wide range of sources has been called upon.[38] The majority of material in the United Kingdom relating to the British occupation of Indonesia is in The National Archives. Where a historian of the high politics of the intervention, namely British attempts to induce Dutch and Indonesians to negotiate, would have recourse primarily to Foreign Office files, this study of the occupation on the ground has relied heavily on War Office files, in particular WO 203, the Headquarters Papers of Southeast Asia Command, and WO 172, the War Diaries of Southeast Asia Command. Declassified as recently as 1995, this series contains the War Diaries of all the British-Indian formations which served in Indonesia at battalion, brigade, divisional and even corps level. Of particular value have been the Divisional Intelligence Summaries in the Divisional War Diaries. Foreign Office, Cabinet Office and other file series have also been used. Another source of information has been the personal papers of individuals who played a key role in the British occupation. These are to be found in the Imperial War Museum, the National Army Museum and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives at King's College, University of London. Then there are the many Divisional, Regimental and Battalion Histories. Although, strictly speaking, works of secondary literature, they have not had a wide readership, being chiefly intended for those who formed parts of the units concerned. They were often written by Commanding Officers or other officers 'in the know' and present a partial view. A good example is the history of the 9th Gurkha Rifles which dismisses the 1919 Massacre of Amritsar in three short paragraphs. These histories are best seen as personal memoirs.

As well as consulting archives and libraries, the author has generated new material by contacting participants in the British occupation. By working through the Indian Army Association and contacting Regimental Association Secretaries, it has been possible to trace individuals who served as officers in Indian and Gurkha battalions. In the summer of 2000, when most of the interviews were carried out, a number of battalion commanders were still alive. Via the modern day Regimental Centres of the British battalions which served in Indonesia – the British Army has undergone more reorganization since the Second World War than the Indian Army – it has been possible to contact British officers and other ranks, in the case of one battalion, 6th South Wales Borderers, which served in northern Sumatra. A Dutch internee and a Red Cross worker who both married British officers serving in Indonesia have also been interviewed. Those contacted have had their preferred method of communication. Some have been interviewed face to face and others over the telephone. Some have corresponded and others have compiled memoirs at the request of the author or supplied memoirs which they had already written. All this material has enabled the author of this study to carry out a thorough reappraisal of the British occupation of Indonesia and to shed new light on a number of important issues.

The book begins chronologically and then moves on to address key themes of the occupation. Chapter 1 shows how the British gained responsibility for the Indies at short notice and reveals the lack of reliable evidence about conditions there. Where previous works have simply drawn attention to this lack of information, this study analyses the value of the small amount of intelligence that did exist. The Chapter goes on to look at the chaotic nature of the British deployment in West and Central Java.

Chapter 2 is devoted entirely to the Battle of Surabaya, an event central both to the British occupation and to Indonesian national consciousness. It states that the British presence was brought about because the British relief organization had sent thousands of internees there from Central Java. The Chapter then asserts that it was the failure of British commanders adequately to define British objectives in the city that was the most significant cause of the fighting. The book then moves on to examine a number of themes. Chapter 3 looks at Anglo–Indonesian relations in the aftermath of Surabaya. Chapter 4 looks at Anglo–Dutch relations during the same period and relates the handover of the key areas to the Dutch and the departure of the British forces from Java. Chapter 5 examines the British occupation of Sumatra, contrasting it with the occupation of Java. It dispels the myth that, for the British, Sumatra was an easier task. Chapter 6 examines the morale of personnel in the British-Indian occupation force in the face of the challenges which it encountered.

The overall picture that emerges is one of confusion rather than the execution of a clear-cut plan. The British occupation force was out of its depth in a situation of political complexity. It did not possess the strength either to carry out a systematic restoration of Dutch colonial power in the face of Indonesian resistance or significantly to affect Dutch plans for the future of the territory. In this respect, Indonesian and Dutch 'myths' surrounding the British occupation can be shown to be precisely that. British weakness, fear and inexperience in the field of guerrilla warfare led to atrocities against Indonesians which the official historians do not mention. British commanders were frequently at odds about how best to deal with situations and British and Indian troops felt keenly the moral challenges with which they were confronted.

1

THE ARRIVAL OF BRITISH FORCES IN INDONESIA

Planning the British occupation of Indonesia

When the Japanese surrendered on 14 August, Mountbatten was informed by the British Chiefs of Staff that the transfer of southern Indochina and the Indies would take place at once.[1] Mountbatten agreed with the Australians that their 7th and 9th Divisions would occupy the outer islands of the Indies. These troops would eventually be relieved by his own in all areas except Timor and Dutch New Guinea.[2] In the initial stages of their intervention, therefore, the British would only be responsible for Java, Madura, Bali, Lombok, Sumatra and a number of other islands in the area. In the Dutch Parliament, Professor Logemann, Minister of Overseas Territories, stated that the Dutch Government had not been consulted about the boundary change.[3] The change he referred to was the allocation of the Indies to Southeast Asia Command, not the division of responsibility between British and Australians. This remark was symptomatic of a general Dutch objection to the transfer of the Indies from American to British responsibility. In Australia, the Dutch Government-in-exile of the Indies had placed the bulk of their limited resources behind the American advance, which was based there. This Government thought that it would be impossible to transfer these to Southeast Asia Command, based on India.[4] It was doubted that the British were equipped to take on the responsibility for the Indies whereas the Americans had long been preparing to take control of the area.[5]

On 13 August, Mountbatten had been given instructions by the British Chiefs of Staff as to what the forces of Southeast Asia Command were to do on arrival. His troops were to accept the Japanese surrender, disarm and repatriate the Japanese, rescue and repatriate Allied prisoners of war and internees and prepare, by the introduction and establishment of Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs officers, for the eventual handing over of the administration to the Dutch civil authorities.

Co-operation between the British and Dutch was deemed essential for a smooth handover of the administration. As Sumatra had always been part of Southeast Asia Command, it had been necessary for them to reach agreement – the Anglo-Dutch Civil Affairs Agreement – on its administration in the event of its capture from the Japanese. According to this agreement, Mountbatten would assume overall

control, but the laws of the country, that is, the laws of the government which had been in power before the Japanese invasion, would be enforced by members of the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Organization. A Dutch Chief Civil Affairs Officer was to be appointed as its Commanding Officer. During the early stages of the occupation, he was to be a staff officer of the military commander and would conduct the administration of the civil population on his behalf. Later, the Dutch Chief Civil Affairs Officer was to be given wider authority by the military commander or Mountbatten.

The British and Dutch decided on 4 September that the principles of the Civil Affairs Agreement for Sumatra should apply to all areas of the Indies which were to be occupied by British forces. It was also decided that the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Organization should be set up within Southeast Asia Command. Its Chief Commanding Officer would at first be Mountbatten. After Batavia had been occupied, Hubertus J. Van Mook, the Lieutenant-Governor-General, would take over this position.[6] Van Mook was in Australia with the Government-in-exile of the Indies.

It is important to recognize the nature of Anglo–Dutch planning prior to the deployment of the forces of Southeast Asia Command. The Anglo-Dutch Civil Affairs Agreement, relating to Sumatra, had been drawn up in wartime in anticipation of a military reconquest of that island. When Japanese forces retreated in the face of Allied military action, their place would immediately be filled by Allied troops: there would therefore be no power vacuum. The Agreement was overwhelmingly preoccupied with the trial of those who had collaborated with the Japanese and the jurisdiction which Southeast Asia Command would have over the Dutch forces who, it was assumed, would be participating in the reconquest of Sumatra. It went without saying that, in the event of a military reconquest, Allied authority would be established on a territory-wide basis and that the Dutch would take over from Southeast Asia Command. The question of Indonesian nationalism was not considered. In consequence, the terms of the Agreement, extended to cover Java, were inappropriate for the situation which arose after the Japanese surrender. This was one where a limited number of British-Indian troops arrived weeks after the end of hostilities to restore the Dutch to a country where an independent Indonesian government had proclaimed its own authority, had substantial armed forces under its command and where the bulk of the Indonesian population, many of whom had their own arms, were deeply suspicious of the returning Dutch.[7]

F. S. V. Donnison, in *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943–46*, gives it as his opinion that the agreements reached between the British and the French prior to the British deployment in Southern Indochina served their purpose much better in that, unlike the Anglo-Dutch Civil Affairs Agreement, they were drawn up at the end of hostilities:

> The general tenor of the [Anglo-French] agreements was to safeguard French sovereignty from avoidable encroachment by the Allied

> Commander. They differed in this from the agreement with the Netherlands Indies which … was drawn up in 1944, with the likelihood in mind of a re-occupation of Netherlands East Indies territory during active military operations against the Japanese, and was therefore mainly concerned to safeguard the temporary paramountcy of the military over the civil authorities. In so doing it tended to force upon the Allied Commander a responsibility for re-establishing Dutch administration because the Dutch were prevented from doing this themselves. The French agreements were in this regard much more appropriate to post-surrender conditions than the Dutch.[8]

In mid-August, however, and for many weeks to come, the nature of the situation which awaited the forces of Southeast Asia Command was unknown to both British and Dutch. On 14 August, for example, Brigadier Gibbons, the Director of Civil Administration at Southeast Asia Command Headquarters, sent the text of the Anglo-Dutch Civil Affairs Agreement to Major-General Weijerman of the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Organization with a note which read: 'Will General Weijerman obtain confirmation that the text … is correct and that the instrument continues to be acceptable as a basis of action in the brief period of military control which now appears likely?'[9] This 'brief period of military control' was to turn into 13 months of bitter fighting with regular and irregular Indonesian forces. Leaflets which were dropped by the British on behalf of the Dutch over the Indies also reveal the extent to which the British and Dutch were out of touch:

> We know that your joy, like ours, is great, but do not express that joy by making demonstrations yet. Carry on your work calmly and await the arrival of the Allied troops and of the representatives of your own Government, who will come to you as soon as possible.
>
> Help Allied prisoners, soon to be released, in any way you can.

The leaflet ended : 'Long live the Queen [Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands]. Long live Indonesia.'[10]

September saw a preliminary deployment by small British and Dutch teams composed of military personnel in Java and Sumatra. They were to assist Allied prisoners of war and internees before the arrival of British forces. Estimates vary, but it is clear that there were at least 68,000 Allied prisoners of war and internees on Java at the time of the Japanese surrender.[11] At the end of August, the Royal Air Force Airborne Control Unit based in Ceylon had over 20 parachuting teams ready to take part in Operation Zipper, code name for the landings on the west coast of Malaya. As with the landings in Normandy in 1944, the plan was that paratroops would be dropped behind enemy lines before the seaborne landings and hinder enemy communications to the beaches. These teams were no longer needed as the operation was being undertaken in peacetime. They were therefore offered by Headquarters Air Command Southeast Asia to Headquarters Allied Land Forces

Southeast Asia. Nine teams were held in Colombo in Ceylon in readiness for operations in Java and Sumatra. Teams usually consisted of four personnel: an Executive Officer, who commanded the team, a Signaller, Medical Officer and Medical Orderly. They took with them medical equipment and foodstuffs.[12]

The first team was dropped in the Batavia area on 8 September. On 15 September, No. 6 RAPWI Control Staff arrived at Tandjoengpriok, the port of Batavia, on board HMS *Cumberland*.[13] RAPWI stood for 'Repatriation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees'. Little interest was displayed in their arrival by local people: they were greeted only by children. There were, however, nationalist flags and quotations in English concerning Indonesia's right to be free from Dutch rule which it was clearly intended the British should see. Their Headquarters were established in Batavia's Hotel des Indes. A Dutch contingent arrived the next day. British and Dutch set about planning operations. On 18 September, a team was dropped on Magelang. The next day, another was dropped on Surabaya. The dropping of this team apparently caused a 'riot' among Indonesians in the city as there were no prisoners of war or internees there. These two teams travelled to Batavia to be briefed and then returned to their respective locations.[14] All the teams faced a considerable task. They went into their respective areas with inaccurate knowledge about both numbers of internees and locations of camps but had to effect a steady evacuation from the camps so as to maintain the morale of the internees. It proved of the greatest importance to gain Japanese co-operation. In the event, the Japanese were co-operative.[15]

The team at Magelang met representatives of the local Red Cross Committee and then Japanese Staff Officers. Indonesians allegedly looted supplies which were dropped for prisoners of war and internees and attacked Red Cross workers who collected them. Consequently, Wing-Commander Tull, who headed the relief effort in Central Java, sent a signal to Ceylon asking that supply drops be stopped. The team discovered that the internment camps were not at Magelang though the military hospital there had been handed over by the Japanese for the use of sick internees and was being prepared for their reception. At Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe, however, 25 miles from Magelang, there were six camps containing over 14,000 people; at Semarang, five camps contained about the same number. In the prisons at Semarang and Ambarawa, there were a large number of political prisoners of various nationalities including some prisoners of war. The team enjoyed good relations with local Indonesian Republican officials, who were prepared to co-operate with the British so long as they did not infringe the sovereignty of the Republican Government. These officials were aware of the importance for their cause of world opinion but had little control over the reactions of their fellow Indonesians. The team organized the evacuation of 773 internees to the hospital at Magelang: 600 of these were serious hospital cases; 900 hospital cases remained. Nearly 1,500 internees required constant medical attention but did not need to go to hospital; 110 internees were evacuated to the Wonosobo Hill Convalescent Centre. Internees were also sent to Soerakarta and Salatiga until this had to be stopped because of Indonesian hostility there. Sixty-eight internees were evacuated

by air from Semarang to Batavia or Bandung so that they could rejoin their families. On 28 September, Rear-Admiral Patterson, who had arrived at Batavia on board HMS *Cumberland* and was at that time the most senior British officer in the Indies, ordered the release of all political prisoners held by the Japanese. Accordingly, Groom went to Soerakarta and Jogjakarta to release political prisoners. Among the political prisoners in all of these locations were British prisoners of war.

The team at Surabaya was composed entirely of Dutch personnel. It arranged accommodation for prisoners of war and internees who were to be sent there but did not make contact with the Indonesian Republican authorities in the city. Four trainloads of prisoners of war and internees were sent to Surabaya, totaling 1,800 people, 900 of whom were from the camps at Banjoebiroe, which had priority for evacuation in Central Java because sanitation and hygiene there were far worse than in the camps at Ambarawa. After this first evacuation, fighting broke out between the Japanese and the newly constituted Indonesian Republican forces in Surabaya. The Indonesian forces eventually assumed complete control and disarmed the Japanese. Consequently, it became impossible to send more prisoners of war and internees to Surabaya. Those who had already been evacuated there, along with 1,000 others who had gone there from all over Java on their own initiative, were, according to a British report, in 'great danger'.[16] Their presence in the city was to necessitate the despatch of an Allied force to superintend their evacuation. Chapter 2 will show what happened to this force and to the internees.

Most Dutch internees were not evacuated at this stage on account of British policy, laid down in a RAPWI directive of 13 August. This stated that Dutch prisoners of war and internees, both inside and outside the Indies, could only be repatriated to countries other than the Indies if their families were in such countries or if they themselves had simply happened to be in or near the Indies at the time of the Japanese invasion but had no Dutch or Indies government function or any private connection in the Indies.[17] As for the vast majority of the Dutch internees, who had had a role in the territory before the war, the British intention was that they would be gathered into areas where they could be given medical treatment after their internment by the Japanese. There they would be restored to health so that they could, in due course, resume their pre-war lives in a country where Dutch authority was being restored by the British.

Southeast Asia Command was slow to realize what was happening in the Indies as the RAPWI teams carried out their work and as the Command itself prepared to deploy its forces on Java and Sumatra. Intelligence was poor, as has been mentioned earlier. Only after several weeks did an accurate picture emerge. When it did, the occupation plans were changed.

Mountbatten told General Marshall at Potsdam that he would require 'adequate advance intelligence' before he could assume responsibility for the territories which MacArthur wished to transfer. The Potsdam Conference was held in Germany at the end of the war in Europe and it was here that the Indies were entrusted to Southeast Asia Command. Mountbatten never received any such intelligence, for

General MacArthur had none to offer: his drive on Japan had by-passed the Indies. There had been no need to gather intelligence on that area.[18]

In the absence of American intelligence, and with no agents of their own in the area, the British were at first compelled to rely on little more than guesswork. An intelligence report dated 24 August 1945 clearly indicates a state of uncertainty on a range of issues. On the reception which would be given to the return of the Dutch by the Indonesians, the report stated:

> It is thought that the Indonesian people now realize that they have been exploited and that the Japanese promises of 'co-prosperity' were a sham. They will therefore welcome the return of the Dutch by whom they were well treated, except for a small minority who will have profited materially under the Japanese.

It was more accurate in relation to the Chinese: '*The Chinese* have good reason to fear and hate the Japanese and the majority of them will give every possible assistance to an Allied reoccupation force.' The report then went on to speculate about the likely attitudes of two indigenous groups on Sumatra. It was thought that the Acehnese, in northern Sumatra, were anti-Japanese and that there had been clashes in which both Acehnese and Japanese had been killed. The Bataks, by contrast, were thought to be more favourably inclined towards the Japanese than the other indigenous groups. They were, apparently, the only people on Sumatra who permitted their daughters to marry Japanese and numbers of them had been employed by the Japanese as police agents and informers. The report went on to name the various Japanese-inspired home defence organizations and stated that the members of youth organizations had received military training.[19] The Japanese had created these organizations so that they might look for Allied agents and help resist a possible Allied invasion.

On 3 September, the Dutch intelligence organization in Brisbane expressed the opinion that there might be active, though probably ineffective, opposition to a Dutch return to Java by the Republican Army. It thought that this army numbered between 40,000 and 45,000 men. The organization also knew about the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic.[20] Three days later, a message was sent by the Anglo-Dutch Country Section at Colombo to Mountbatten's Headquarters at Kandy. The Section had been established during the war to carry out operations in the Indies but had never done so. It was told by the Sultan of Langkat that it was planned to raise the Indonesian national flag all over Sumatra on 8 September. It relayed this information to Mountbatten's Headquarters and recommended that action be taken to countermand the Indonesian declaration of independence so as to prevent a possible outbreak of Indonesian-Chinese riots on the 8th but did not suggest the form that such action might take.[21] That the Section should have thought that action by the British, who were not in a position to do anything of consequence at this stage, could countermand the Indonesian declaration of independence indicates either that it

did not rate the strength of the nationalist movement highly or that it overestimated the reality of British interference.

The introduction of the RAPWI teams into Java and Sumatra did little to improve the state of British intelligence. They were overwhelmingly concerned with the welfare of the prisoners of war and internees and had little time to reflect on how Indonesians might react to a British military intervention. The teams reported that, in most parts of Java, the Japanese had begun to hand over responsibility for the maintenance of law and order to the Indonesian Republican authorities, in defiance of the orders which they had been given by Mountbatten. They stated that the newly proclaimed Republican Government was not yet sufficiently firmly established to maintain order but that meetings of Indonesians were claiming the right to retain independence and that attacks by Indonesians made it impossible to move internees by night.[22]

These reports do not appear to have made any impact on the Headquarters of Southeast Asia Command during the first half of September. The Allied Land Forces Southeast Asia Weekly Intelligence Review for the week ending 14 September mostly concerned itself with the nature of the various indigenous groups on Sumatra. As such, it would have been more suitable for a group of anthropologists than for an Army. When it finally got round to the question of nationalism on Sumatra, the report gave a brief description of Japanese incorporation of Sumatrans in the administration of the island, related the setting up of a Preparatory Commission on 25 July 1945 to investigate preparations for Sumatran independence and stated that this had been followed up by the establishment of an East Indies Preparatory Committee on 15 August. It then admitted: 'Little specific information concerning the actual granting of independence to Indonesia, since the Japanese capitulation, has come to hand.'[23]

A note of urgency was sounded on 18 September when Rear-Admiral Patterson in Batavia reported an increase in political tension and acts of violence and warned that, if Allied forces did not arrive soon, the situation could 'get out of hand'. Accordingly, the next day, General Slim, Commander Allied Land Forces Southeast Asia, ordered 14th Army to send Headquarters 23rd Indian Division from Malaya to Java along with two Brigade Groups. He planned that one of these Brigade Groups would sail for Batavia by 1 October and that the other Brigade Group would go to Surabaya later. Lieutenant-General Sir Philip Christison was appointed Commander Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies.[24] Soon after his appointment, he held a press conference at which he outlined the Allied tasks in Indonesia. Asked about a possible hostile reception, Christison replied that he had no reason to think that this might happen. He had been told, he said, that Indonesians liked the Dutch.[25]

The Weekly Intelligence Review for the week ending 21 September followed a similar structure to its forerunner. It indicates that Southeast Asia Command, although it appreciated the need to hasten its plans, was still not fully apprised of the situation in the Indies. The Review looked at the various indigenous groups on Java, gave a brief description of Japanese incorporation of Javanese in the

administration of the island, again related the setting up of the East Indies Preparatory Committee and repeated word for word its admission of the week before concerning a lack of information about the actual granting of independence to Indonesia.[26] That Sumatra should have been dealt with before Java in these Weekly Intelligence Reviews suggests that the intelligence sections of Southeast Asia Command may not yet have fully appreciated that Java had also become their responsibility.

On 24 September a report was sent by the Commander of Force 136, Major Mackenzie, to the Director of Intelligence at Mountbatten's Headquarters. Force 136 was a quasi-military organization, part of Special Operations Executive, attached to Southeast Asia Command, which had carried out a number of covert operations in Southeast Asia during the war. It had chiefly been concerned with sabotaging Japanese communications. This report was similarly out of touch with events in the Indies. Again, it focused more on Sumatra than on Java. Mackenzie relayed information which had been given to him by one of the RAPWI teams on Sumatra which identified the Japanese rather than the Indonesians as the possible cause of trouble:

> Operation STATUS is of the opinion that at the present time 10,000 Allied troops supplemented by a good police force would be sufficient to maintain order. He stresses the fact however that the longer the delay the less chance there is of a smooth take over as it is believed that the Japanese are organizing secret societies to spread unrest.

Another source of worry for Mackenzie was the infiltration of communism from Malaya: 'There are indications that some communists have recently reached SUMATRA from MALACCA.' He contented himself with naming the anti-Dutch political parties and associations on Sumatra. He also named the principal Indonesian leaders as Sukarno, Hatta, Dr Amir, Hassan, and Adinegoro. He then made a remark which demonstrated his ignorance of recent events: 'if the landing of Allied troops is long delayed, SOEKARNO and other leaders may complete the formation of the Independent Indonesian Government and organize a Military Force from SOEKARELLA and HEIHO sources.'[27] He did not realize that the Indonesian Republic had already been proclaimed and that its leaders had organized military and police forces from these Japanese-sponsored paramilitary groups.

It was only on 28 September, as a result of information which they had received from Lady Mountbatten, who had made a tour of internee camps in the region, and from two rescued prisoners of war, that Mountbatten and Slim concluded that the situation in Java was more serious than had at first been realized. Accordingly, Mountbatten decided to limit the scope of the British mission. Under the terms of the Anglo-Dutch Civil Affairs Agreement, the British were supposed to pave the way for a resumption of Dutch administration throughout the Indies. Mountbatten now modified this by issuing a military order to XV Indian Corps, the force earmarked for the Indies. Law and order were now to be established only to the

extent necessary to carry out the occupation of the two 'key areas' of Batavia and Surabaya, the concentration and disarming of the Japanese and the rescue of prisoners of war and internees. 'Key areas' meant areas where it was essential that the British deploy troops in order to carry out their mission. Within the key areas, a military administration was to be set up and full authority was to be exercised over military and civilians alike by the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Organization. Outside the key areas, responsibility for the re-establishment of Dutch sovereignty was to rest entirely upon the Dutch who would enter through the key areas. British troops were not to assist in the re-establishment of Dutch sovereignty outside those areas. Lieutenant-General Christison, as has been mentioned above, had been appointed to command XV Indian Corps. This was now known as Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies. Christison was ordered to go to Batavia as soon as possible.[28]

It was only at this point that an accurate intelligence report was issued, though it too focused more on Sumatra than on Java. It demonstrated a clear knowledge that the Japanese were not only not restraining Indonesian nationalists but were, in fact, arming them:

> As in other countries in Southeast Asia, the internal situation in N.E.I. is affected by the actions of nationalist parties, by communal tension and by the embarrassing efforts of the Japanese whether passive, when they allow nationalist movements full sway, or active, when they sell arms to rebel bands.

The report also mentioned both the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic and the danger of resistance to British forces by Indonesian extremists:

> Of the many nationalist parties only one appears to have a large following. This is the KETOEA KOMITE National directed by Dr. Soekarno who recently proclaimed the Indonesian Republic, with himself as President. Soekarno in a recent interview stated that he did not intend to fight but hoped to obtain international recognition for his Republic by peaceful means. Unfortunately all these commendable views are not shared by all his followers and in JAVA a large section of the party have broken away and are forming guerilla bands in the interior, with the intention of opposing any Allied occupation. They are being helped by a number of Japs who are disappointed by the Japanese capitulation.

The report then dealt with nationalist activity in Batavia and Surabaya: 'In JAVA unrest is reported from both BATAVIA and SOURABAYA. In BATAVIA the Japanese are in control but nationalist slogans, mainly written in English, are marked up on walls during the night, and the Revolutionary Party has at least one wireless transmitter in use.' The report then went on to deal with Sumatra. It named the nationalist leaders on the island and expressed the opinion that 'communal

prejudices' there would be a greater source of unrest than nationalism. By 'communal prejudices' was meant antagonism between Chinese and indigenous Indonesians and between different Indonesian ethnic groups. The report also stated that the various indigenous groups on Sumatra would most likely co-operate with the Allies. It feared that unrest might be caused by the 30,000 Javanese 'coolies' in the south of the island who, employed by the Japanese for railway construction, had been dismissed and were in 'a starving condition'.[29]

It emerges from this review of intelligence reports that British intelligence was, for far too long, inadequate. It did not help matters that, by September, there was an increasing shortage of personnel in the intelligence sections of Southeast Asia Command.[30] Nevertheless, there was in the Command an inability both to note the significance of information from teams in the field and relay it to units in the regular intelligence bulletins and to realize that the nationalist movement on Java, the newly acquired territory, required just as much attention as did that on Sumatra. The result was that British units and their Commanders – Major-General Hawthorn, the Commander for Java, and Lieutenant-General Christison, the overall Commander – went into the Indies ill-informed about the reception which they might receive. They would learn about nationalism by experiencing it.

The British deployment in West Java

On 29 September, 1st Seaforth Highlanders, part of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, disembarked at Tandjoengpriok, the port of Batavia, and moved into the city.[31] They were closely followed by Christison, who arrived by air that evening along with his ADC and a signal section. Christison made contact with the Seaforth Highlanders and the marines from HMS *Cumberland*, who were also in Batavia. A villa had been got ready for him and another had been set aside to serve as Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies. When going for a stroll after dinner, he and his ADC were very nearly shot as bullets ricocheted near them. They subsequently found out that escaped prisoners belonging to the KNIL, the Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger, or Royal Netherlands Indian Army, had been settling scores with the Indonesian Republican Police and others.

The next day, Christison's Advanced Headquarters flew in. Christison got in touch with Major-General Hawthorn, the Commander of 23rd Indian Division, and made him responsible for Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok.[32] Van der Plas, the most senior Dutch colonial official in the Indies pending the arrival of Van Mook from Australia, made a broadcast in Dutch and Malay from Batavia. Like Van Mook, he had spent the war in Australia. The broadcast illustrated both the inability of Dutch officialdom to grasp reality and also its heavy, threatening manner. Van der Plas called on Indonesians to work with the Dutch to build a 'New Indonesia' without specifying what this might be. He said that it was time to call in 'representatives of all races and communities representing all denominations' who would be asked 'to express their views as to how to assist and further the promotion

of New Indonesia'. His closing words were not likely to inspire confidence among Indonesians as to the immediacy of constitutional change:

> Anyone who may not be called in and who feels that he holds a constructive view is requested to get in touch with us. Letters should be addressed to N.I.C.A. at B.P.M. building, No. 1, Koningsplein Oost. Anyone who personally presents himself at the above address to present his views is guaranteed his safe return to his home.[33]

Christison toured Batavia. Ostensibly, all seemed well: trams were in operation and trains were running out of the main station to Bandung. But slogans were daubed on their sides: 'Atlantic Charter means freedom from Dutch Imperialism' and 'America for the Americans – Monroe – Indonesia for the Indonesians'. In the centre of Batavia, the walls of public buildings were daubed with slogans: 'Merdeka', that is, 'Freedom'; 'To hell with Van Mook'; 'Van Mook and Van der Plas you can't pull the wool over our eyes' and 'Death to Van Mook'.

Alerted to the reality of the situation, Christison decided to go to Van der Plas, who had taken refuge on board HMS *Cumberland*. Van der Plas told him about the foundation of the Indonesian Republic but played it down. He said: 'The Javanese people love the Dutch. We are their father and mother; they can't manage without us. They know this perfectly well and this republic set-up is just to wring concessions in self-government from us.' Christison suggested to Van der Plas that he rebroadcast Queen Wilhelmina's 1942 proclamation over Radio Batavia, which he did. This proclamation had promised a re-examination of the relationship between the Indies and the Netherlands and held out a vague promise of self-government. The result of the rebroadcast was that the next day, 1 October, Sukarno sent Christison a message saying that he was delighted with the broadcast and that he would co-operate with the British in every way. Christison met the senior Dutch Commanders, Admiral Helfrich, who had been Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in the Indies at the time of the Japanese invasion, and General Van Oyen, the Commander of the KNIL. Like Van der Plas, both men insisted that the Javanese loved the Dutch; they also apparently said that the Indonesian Republic had no status among the people and would soon collapse.[34]

At the same time, 1st Seaforth Highlanders were joined by the remaining units in 1st Indian Infantry Brigade and the Brigade Commander, Brigadier King. These units were 178th Assault Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery, 1/16th Punjab and 1st Patiala Infantry. Tactical Headquarters XV Indian Corps and Tactical Headquarters 23rd Indian Division also arrived, as did Advanced Headquarters RAF Netherlands East Indies, which came under the Command of XV Indian Corps and set up a Joint Headquarters with it. The role of the RAF was intended to be peaceful, namely the evacuation of prisoners of war and internees and the transportation and supply of ground forces, but it was stipulated by Headquarters

Southeast Asia Command that it could be used offensively, though only on Christison's specific orders.

On 4 October, the infantry battalions of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade were made responsible for 'law and order' in Batavia. Each battalion was allotted a sector of the city and 178th Assault Field Regiment took over the guarding of internee camps and the airfield and provided guards in the dock area under the command of Rear-Admiral Patterson.[35] The local Indonesian Republican police force was brought under British control.[36] The Indonesian Republican authorities were at this stage in control of the railway system, tramways, the telephone and telegraph systems and the water supply.[37] Indonesians in Batavia were initially friendly towards the British, and Christison was able to order all troops who were not on duty to walk about the city and enter shops and cafes unarmed, but Indonesian hostility grew as time went by and armed encounters between British and Indonesian forces in which both sides suffered fatalities were not long in coming.[38] Indonesians in Batavia were armed with grenades and machine-guns. Looting was a problem from the start, and required the constant attention of British and Indian troops. The British were obliged to adhere to a policy of opening fire on looters.[39]

To the British and Indian troops on the ground, the situation in which they found themselves in Batavia, namely an urban guerrilla war in what was supposed to be a peacetime operation, was bewildering and at times bizarre. The Commanding Officer of 1st Seaforth Highlanders, Lieutenant-Colonel Neill, was returning from a conference in his staff car on the evening of 2 October when shots were fired at the car and stones were thrown. The driver accelerated but, in trying to avoid a roadblock, crashed. The Commanding Officer had already been hit on the side of the head by a stone and the windscreen had been shattered by another. The Indonesian attackers gathered round the crashed car but, on discovering that its occupants were British and not Dutch, adopted 'a most friendly attitude, got the car on the road again, and escorted the C.O. [Commanding Officer] back to the Bn. [battalion] lines'. On 8 October, a private belonging to 'B' Company of the Seaforth Highlanders went out from his post by himself and entered a restaurant. There, his rifle was stolen. He gave chase to the thief but was attacked and killed by a group of Indonesians. The Indonesian Republican Police managed to recover both his body and the rifle.[40] Further British fatalities occurred on the night of 11–12 October when a patrol of 1/16th Punjab went to investigate a report of Indonesians firing on lorries on the Batavia–Meester Cornelis road. A British officer and a Viceroy's-commissioned officer were killed. Another patrol then 'cleared' the area and rounded up 'suspects'.[41]

Ian Gibb, then a nineteen-year-old Lieutenant in the Seaforth Highlanders, has clear recollections of a number of incidents in Batavia in which he was involved during this early period. He has pointed to the way in which such incidents posed unfamiliar ethical problems. On one occasion, he took part in a dawn raid in which Indonesian opposition was expected. The plan was to 'rush in' on a number of houses:

> At the very first house the door was locked and someone in the excitement shot the lock away with a short burst of automatic fire from a machine-gun. Inside was a Chinese woman and her child and one of the bullets had gone through her leg, fortunately it was a flesh wound but it was the first time that the position of the 'innocents' in a revolutionary situation was really brought home to me.

On another occasion, Gibb had to make a snap decision on a matter of life and death:

> A further incident called for a personal and rapid decision from myself. We had surrounded a dingy kampong area at night and there were only a few weak street lights about the place. Others in the Company were carrying out the search and I was deploying my platoon. The normal form in such a situation if someone who was a suspect ran for it was to shout to him in his own language and, if he failed to stop, to open fire. But the precise circumstances in which to open fire was considered legitimate were ill defined. The main ruling in all internal security operations was one of minimum force. In India and other places when faced with a definite riot there were very clearly laid down procedures but, even then, in the event of a rioter being killed, the military afterwards had to justify their action. This night I was temporarily alone in an alleyway moving from one section to another when there was a pounding of feet and a lot of shouting 'Brentee Brentee' (stop stop). A native figure bare to the waist came out of an opening somewhere close by and tore up the alley as fast as his legs could carry him, and he was unarmed. I could have shot; I had been a marksman and his body was an easy target. It was a moment when a very quick decision was called for. I held my fire.[42]

Life for the British was not made easier by the fact that those Dutch inhabitants of Batavia who had settled back into their homes had their own ideas about how the occupation force should be employed. They were seemingly oblivious to the fact that the British were trying to maintain a semblance of law and order in the capital of the Indies with only three of their own infantry battalions, as this entry in the War Diaries of 1st Patialas makes clear: 'Dutch keep on bringing false reports but on the spot no trouble is found. They pretend that their houses are being looted but actually they want their area constantly patrolled or require transport to shift their luggage from one place to another.'[43]

Relations between British and Indian troops on the one hand and the re-mobilized troops of the KNIL, mainly Ambonese and Menadonese, were uneasy from the start. Whereas the British were simply concerned to carry out a humanitarian mission, the troops of the KNIL were opposed to the Indonesian independence movement and were keen to wind back the clock to pre-war days. They shot at anything suspicious. Their attitude and actions were to make life

very difficult for the British. There were countless shooting incidents in which the British deemed that the KNIL had fired first. As a result of this, General Christison decided in the middle of October that all KNIL troops would be posted to the south of Batavia. There they established a base for themselves, under the command of Lieutenant-General W. Schilling.[44]

Shortly after their deployment in Batavia, it became clear to the British that they would have to venture into the interior of West Java, to the cities of Buitenzorg and Bandung. Bandung was more than 100 miles into the interior but there were a number of reasons for its occupation. First, there were a great many internees nearby. Second, it was important as a railway centre. Buitenzorg was chosen for occupation because it lay on the Batavia–Bandung road and because there were internee camps in and around the town.[45]

The British deployment inland was anything but orderly. At first, a single company of 1/16th Punjab was sent to Buitenzorg. This was a dangerously small force to despatch into the heart of potentially hostile territory. It was planned that this force would be relieved by 3/3rd Gurkha Rifles, one of the battalions in 37th Indian Infantry Brigade. 3/3rd Gurkhas was shipped over to Batavia from Malaya, most of the battalion travelling in a small Dutch vessel that had been employed on the cross-channel run before the war. No briefing was given to anyone in the battalion during the voyage. The few maps which were available were printed in Dutch. The battalion was told simply that speed was of the essence. Consequently, when the ship found itself off the port of Batavia, troops were hurriedly despatched in assault craft. No-one manning the craft knew where they were going and the battalion landed on an island, much to the amusement of a few Dutch officers who happened to be there. The men called back the landing craft and eventually a landing was effected in the right place. No sooner had the battalion arrived than it was told that it was to go straight to Buitenzorg and relieve the company of 1/16th Punjab who were to return to Batavia in the same transports. The Battalion Commander felt that he had not been given any guidance on the relations to be established with the Indonesians in Buitenzorg. All he was told when he raised this was that the task of the battalion was to 'maintain law and order' and to protect the Allied prisoners of war and internees who were being held in various camps by the Japanese and were being threatened by Indonesians. Nothing was said about policy, the position of the Japanese or of the lengths to which the battalion might go in carrying out its orders. In the words of the Regimental History: 'The main thing apparently to be borne in mind at all times was that "we were neutral in any quarrel between the Dutch and the Indonesians."'

The battalion duly set off for Buitenzorg. On its arrival, a brief conference was held with the commander of the Punjab company who was anxious to leave: the company had left within the hour. It rapidly became clear to the battalion that the local situation was vastly different from what it was thought to be in Batavia. There were at least three camps in various parts of the town containing in total 4,000 or 5,000 internees. Most of these were 'women and children of various nationalities, chiefly Eurasians'. The total population of Buitenzorg was between

10,000 and 15,000. Of these, 5,000 were Chinese, known for their pro-Dutch leanings. All the ingredients for inter-communal tension were present: 'The Indonesians were openly murderous in their intentions towards them.' The battalion shared the task of maintaining law and order in Buitenzorg with the Japanese. This allocation of responsibility to the Japanese was not popular with the internees, who disliked being protected by them, particularly as the Japanese in question were Kempeitai personnel. The Kempeitai were the Japanese Military Police; among internees, they had a reputation for brutality. Ernest Hillen, who was interned on Java as a child, has described in a published account of his experiences the atmosphere in his camp whenever the Kempeitai paid a visit: 'They were the military police who beat with whips, tore out fingernails, burned with cigarettes, and killed. When a Kempeitai officer wandered into camp, it got cold.'[46]

All over Buitenzorg there were Indonesian independence slogans written in English, as in Batavia. The red and white Indonesian flag was much in evidence. In order to try and achieve harmony in the town and carry out their humanitarian tasks, the battalion tried working through Barnas, the Indonesian Resident, but did not rate the success of this strategy very highly: 'So long as a request met with the approval of the terrorist leaders there was some chance of its being carried out, but the slightest kindness shown to the completely defenceless R.A.P.W.I. personnel meant a refusal.' Neither medical supplies nor fresh vegetables were provided by the Republican administration and any sent in, either from Batavia or from the surrounding countryside, were 'looted' by Indonesians. The battalion was in a weak position in that the Republican administration controlled the electricity and water supplies as well as all communications. Instructions from Headquarters in Batavia, however, warned against bringing pressure to bear on the administration. As in Batavia, the British in Buitenzorg were disconcerted when confronted by urban guerrilla warfare, of which they had little or no experience:

> The kampongs formed islands of native architecture in a sea of European suburbia. From these 'islands', we were subsequently to learn, the inhabitants used to sally out to indulge their tastes for murder and loot, and when troops approached they would retire into these overgrown lairs, from which it was not easy to evict them.[47]

Despite these difficulties, the British in Buitenzorg achieved much on the humanitarian front. No sooner had 3/3rd Gurkha Rifles arrived in Buitenzorg than it was discovered that Indonesian 'extremists' had taken 1,050 Christian Eurasians north to Depok, on the Batavia–Buitenzorg road. Many of these people were killed and others were abducted. The Gurkhas arrived on the scene to find that many women and children had been mutilated. The casualties were sent back to Batavia and the survivors taken to Buitenzorg.[48] In late November, over 1,000 internees were brought into Buitenzorg from Soekaboemi. At the same time, 2,250 internees were evacuated to Batavia.[49]

Another Gurkha battalion belonging to 37th Indian Infantry Brigade, 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, was earmarked for the occupation of Bandung. It went there by train. It was a bold step to despatch a battalion by rail through territory swarming with irregular armed Indonesian groups as well as the regular Indonesian Army. Major Hickey, a company commander in the battalion, has recalled the journey: 'The stations were placarded with anti-Dutch posters and the people, though not openly hostile, were obviously resentful of the passage of troops.'

The battalion arrived in Bandung to encounter the same state of upheaval as that which prevailed at Batavia and Buitenzorg. Patrolling was undertaken during the day and at night 'with a view to preventing the mayhem caused by rampokkers (raiders) armed with parangs, who would break into the up-market Dutch-owned houses, killing or wounding the occupants, destroying the furnishings and looting whatever they could carry away'. Major Hickey sat at the end of a telephone every night in an effort to provide a 'rapid reaction force' which would go to the defence of Dutch civilians who were being attacked in their homes by Indonesian intruders:

> In the early hours of the morning the call would inevitably come, with a frantic Dutchman at the end of the line. '… My huis is being rampokked, the rampokkers have come, my dogs have been killed and I am under the bed.' Inevitably the 'quick reaction section' would arrive after the birds had flown.

As a result of the ineffectiveness of the 'rapid reaction' strategy, tactics were changed. Troops were sent out after dark and groups of two riflemen would take up position, concealing themselves in the shrubberies in the grounds of certain pre-selected Dutch houses. 'The results were spectacular. The rampokkers were picked off with stenguns at close range and the buzz soon got round: the warning notices on every gate-post along the boulevards proclaiming Awas Anjing (beware the dog) were rapidly replaced by their owners with Awas Goorkha!'[50]

Bandung south of the railway line was a 'no-go area' for the British, being, in the words of Lieutenant Carr, the Intelligence Officer of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, 'completely under terrorist control'. Widespread unrest soon manifested itself. Roadblocks were set up and kidnapping and murder became more frequent. To Lieutenant Carr, 'the mist of terrorism had taken concrete form'. In late November, Indonesians opened fire on Gurkha sentries. The British response was to send out 'vigorous fighting patrols under company commanders or other officers and eventually the CO [Commanding Officer of the battalion] took out a column of two companies supported by Japanese tanks to clear out a large nest of pemoedas', that is, an Indonesian paramilitary youth group. The reflections of Lieutenant Carr echo the reflections from eyewitnesses drawn on earlier about the fighting in Batavia and Buitenzorg. Carr describes the battalion's Indonesian adversaries as follows: 'Some were well armed with LMGs [light machine-guns], grenades and rifles but many had little more than swords, lances and knives. However, if taken by surprise by young men with a quite fanatical courage, the results can be painful.' In particular,

Carr was struck by the 'fanaticism' of his adversaries: 'Quite the most fanatical of the lot were Hizboellas – an extreme Muslim religious sect, some of whom were Hadjis, having been to Mecca, and were revered by their companions.'[51]

In spite of hostility from Indonesian forces, the work of locating, bringing in and protecting the internees went on. The Gurkhas soon took over from the Japanese the task of guarding the internee camps in Bandung.[52] A mobile column of the battalion located 90 Eurasians and eight Medadonese at Tjitjalengka and brought most of them back with them to Bandung.[53] Similar expeditions were undertaken to Tjikalongwetan and Tjimalaka. A policy was adopted of bringing in the internees from the outskirts of Bandung to the centre of the city, a process which was virtually complete by the end of November.[54] There were also expeditions into south Bandung to rescue Eurasians in which Japanese troops participated.[55] At the same time, 1,000 internees were evacuated to Batavia.[56]

The British deployment in Central Java

The British deployment in Central Java was as confused and improvised as their deployment in West Java, arguably more so since they came to rely on Japanese assistance to an embarrassing extent. It had not originally been the British intention to go into Central Java at all. The second priority, after the evacuation of Batavia, was Surabaya, Java's second largest city and an important naval base. But such plans had been drawn up at a time when the British were ignorant of the numbers and locations of internee camps. With the deployment of the relief teams in September and their discovery of thousands of internees in Semarang and in the interior of Central Java, it became clear that a force would have to be despatched to protect them and gather them in. In this way, the occupation of Surabaya in East Java became the third and not the second priority. The protection of the internees in Central Java came to assume great importance when it was discovered that Indonesian 'extremists' were surrounding the camps and refusing to let food in.

As in West Java, the force earmarked for the deployment in Central Java was far too small for the task it had to perform in the midst of potentially hostile territory. Before the arrival of troops at Semarang, leaflets were dropped there and at Ambarawa in the interior stating that these troops were coming to disarm the Japanese.[57] This was ironic in view of subsequent developments. In the early morning of 19 October, 3/10th Gurkha Rifles under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Edwardes arrived in the harbour of Semarang. The harbour itself was virtually deserted but firing could be heard in the centre of the town. When the leading company reached the centre of the town, it came under fire from government buildings and suffered casualties of two killed and seven wounded. Indonesians who were carrying a white flag reported that the firing was coming from the Japanese troops in the town. Contact was eventually made with their commander, Major Kido, who offered 'profuse apologies' for what had happened and explained that, since his forces had been fighting with Indonesians that morning and since he himself had been unaware of the arrival of the Gurkhas, he had assumed that

the arrival of the troops heralded a renewal of the morning's fighting.[58] Major Kido had commanded a Japanese battalion in Ambarawa. He had left Ambarawa and gone to Semarang. On arriving in Semarang, his troops discovered that 200 Japanese civilians had been imprisoned and then killed in the town prison by Indonesian 'extremists'. By way of retaliation, the Japanese force had killed 2,000 Indonesians, hence the fighting which the Gurkhas had been caught up in on arrival.[59] The Gurkhas soon took over the airfield in Semarang and Headquarters were established. Their presence was apparently welcomed by local Indonesians because it brought an end to retaliatory measures by the Japanese.[60]

On arriving in Semarang, the Gurkha battalion received instructions from 23rd Indian Division Headquarters on how it was to set about its tasks. An Operational Instruction stated that all ranks should bear in mind that their duties were solely to protect the internees in the town and to maintain 'law and order'. It was specifically stipulated that the battalion was not to take sides in 'political matters' nor to enter into 'political discussions' with local leaders. 'You may however meet local leaders in connection with RAPWI matters and give RAPWI opportunity to do the same'.[61] Accordingly, a meeting was arranged between the Commander of the battalion and Indonesian Republican leaders in Semarang, among whom was Wonsonogoro, the Governor of Central Java. At this meeting, it was agreed that the Indonesian Republican police force in Semarang would be allowed to retain its own arms but that it would disarm ordinary Indonesian civilians.[62]

Shortly after 3/10th Gurkhas had established themselves in Semarang, detachments were sent into the interior, to Ambarawa and Magelang, to establish a presence and make contact with the internees. Initially, a company was sent to Ambarawa and, once arrived, a platoon was sent on to Magelang. This was a dangerously small force to despatch into potentially hostile territory. At first, however, the platoon was welcomed by the local population.[63] Reinforcements were sent to Semarang, then to Ambarawa, enabling the Gurkha battalion to move inland. In due course, the whole battalion came to be based in Magelang. By the end of October, the battalion's Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Edwardes, had arrived in the town. He held a meeting with the town's Republican Resident and other local leaders. At this meeting, tensions became apparent over such issues as the wearing of badges of rank by the few Dutch officers who were in the town and British requisitioning of transport. The conference came to an end with the following exchanges which illustrate the lack of agreement:

> British Commander: I want co-operation which I find lacking to-day.
> Indonesian leaders: We are co-operating.
> British Commander: But not enough.
> Indonesian leaders: When we are sure that RAPWI is not a cloak for NICA we will co-operate.
> British Commander: Have you any evidence of this?
> Indonesian leaders: No.
> British Commander: Anyway it is political and nothing to do with me.[64]

The next day, a force of 5,000 Indonesian 'extremists' attacked the British battalion. The attacking force possessed artillery and mortars. One of the Gurkha companies was cut off and it became necessary to summon Japanese reinforcements from Ambarawa.[65] A company of Major Kido's battalion under the command of a certain Captain Yamada set out on its rescue mission. Five kilometres north of Magelang, this force met Indonesian resistance. A British detachment from Magelang managed to counter this resistance by the use of mortars and the Japanese force was consequently able to fight its way into Magelang to join the beleaguered British garrison.[66] High level negotiations were soon entered into in an attempt to bring the fighting to an end. At the request of local Indonesian leaders, Brigadier Bethell, the Commander of an improvised Brigade formation of 23rd Indian Division which had by this time arrived in Semarang, and Sukarno, the President of the Indonesian Republic, arrived in Magelang on 2 November. A conference was held at which it was agreed that the attacking Indonesian troops would withdraw from their positions and that a Contact Committee would be formed consisting of five Indonesian leaders and five British officers 'to ensure that the task of looking after the internees was accomplished peacefully'.[67]

The first meeting of the newly established Contact Committee was held on 3 November. According to the British, the meeting 'began badly but finished on good terms'. It was also noted: 'Situation appears improved. Contact Team endeavouring to replace general mistrust by confidence.' The next day, a meeting of the Contact Committee was rudely interrupted when boxes of three inch mortar ammunition which were being dropped by air by the RAF came through the roof of the building in which the meeting was being held. This can have done little to assist Anglo–Indonesian harmony. In the days that followed, the Contact Committee meetings became more tense and the British began to fear a renewal of widespread fighting with Indonesian forces. All this time, the work of bringing in the internees into Magelang itself from the outlying camps went ahead.[68] By 20 November, 2,500 internees had been evacuated from Magelang.[69] The British and Indonesian representatives now reached an agreement that the Indonesian Republican authorities would provide the British with petrol and anything else they needed provided the British garrison withdrew once the evacuation of internees had been completed.[70] On 21 November, therefore, the British garrison and the remaining internees pulled out of Magelang. All those who were sick, the aged and small children were put in lorries; the remainder had to walk. This slow moving and vulnerable column of troops and civilians caused General Christison, back at Headquarters in Batavia, to think of the British retreat from Kabul in 1842 when a group similarly composed had tried to get back to India. Repeatedly attacked by Afghan tribesmen, one of the British Regiments had made a stand at Gandamack and been wiped out. Only one man from the original exodus reached India. It was an apt if inauspicious comparison on Christison's part. The convoy from Ambarawa was frequently attacked and on one occasion was held up by a mined bridge. A relief column had to be despatched from Ambarawa to bring it safely into the town.[71]

The situation in Ambarawa had been equally precarious. Fighting had broken out on 20 November. Indonesians blocked roads and sniped British positions, making full use of the mortars and machine-guns which they possessed. The RAF was called in both to carry out supply drops on beleaguered British positions and to strafe Indonesian positions. On the ground, the British had to resort to using tanks and artillery.[72] The column of troops and internees from Magelang arrived in Ambarawa to find a scene of confusion and chaos. Indonesians had poured petrol round one internee camp and set fire to it; they had broken through the rear fence of another and killed British troops and women and children. Over the following days, Indonesians shelled the internee camps and this caused many casualties.[73] All this time, the internees were steadily evacuated to Semarang, a task which was completed by 8 December. Just under a week later, the British garrison pulled out of Ambarawa.[74]

The situation was equally disturbed in Semarang at this time. The initially harmonious relations which had prevailed between the British and Indonesians soon gave way to hostilities. Trouble began in earnest on 17 November. Three British officers belonging to 2/19th Hyderabad, Major Appana, Captain Sur and Lieutenant Dalvi, were escorting some women from one camp to another when their car broke down. Armed Indonesians dressed in civilian clothes came up to the car and demanded that the officers surrender their arms. Before anything could be done one of the Indonesians pointed his pistol at a woman in the back of the car. One of the officers tried to protect the woman and was shot dead. Another of the officers tried to close with the man and he too was shot dead. The third officer, Lieutenant Dalvi, and one of the women managed to escape to the house of a Chinese from where they managed, with the aid of the Indonesian Republican police, to return to the safety of the British lines but Lieutenant Dalvi had at some point during the encounter been badly wounded. He died in hospital the following day. All three officers had been expected at a conference called by the Commanding Officer of 2/19th Hyderabad for the evening of 17 November. Their absence alerted him to the fact that something was wrong. When it was discovered what had happened, British troops went into action, rounding up all armed Indonesians, including the Republican police. Extensive fighting now broke out with Indonesian forces in Semarang. In seven days of fighting, between 18 and 25 November, 2/19th Hyderabad suffered casualties of 13 wounded. Indonesian casualties were far greater. The situation became dangerous for the British when pockets of their troops were isolated and Indonesians established strongpoints in buildings. The RAF were called in to drop bombs and strafe roads. British troops then attempted to demolish Indonesian roadblocks and clear the town, although a shortage of troops prevented a close search for weapons. Further Indonesian attacks were dealt with by means of gunfire from British warships which had arrived in Semarang harbour. After this, the situation quietened down.[75]

By December 1945, the British adventure in Central Java was over. They had gone into the interior in insufficient strength in order to rescue the many internees there and had been forced by adverse circumstances to pull out, withdrawing both

their own troops and the internees to the comparative safety of Semarang, on the coast. By 3 December, 9,400 internees had been withdrawn into Semarang.[76] Despite their initial professions to the Indonesian population of Central Java that they had come to disarm the Japanese, the British had been obliged to rely heavily on Japanese military assistance during the course of operations against Indonesian forces in Semarang, Ambarawa and Magelang. During the course of these joint operations, it is evident that a certain degree of mutual respect and admiration had sprung up between these erstwhile adversaries. The Japanese company under Captain Yamada which had fought its way into Magelang to assist the British had returned to Semarang. An unpublished Japanese account of the activities of Major Kido's force in Central Java contains the following statement about the return of this unit to Semarang: 'Brigadier BETHEL, CRA, expressing his appreciation for the services rendered by YAMADA …, inspected his troops on their returning to SEMARANG. All the officers and men were deeply impressed by this exceptional honour.'[77] So impressed was General Christison with Japanese military assistance in Central Java that he recommended Major Kido for a Distinguished Service Order.[78]

2

THE BATTLE OF SURABAYA

The British creation of an internee problem and British plans for the occupation of Surabaya

On 19 September 1945, a Dutch RAPWI team arrived in Surabaya. Its presence there allegedly caused a 'riot' among Indonesians because there were then no internees in the city. This team set about arranging accommodation for the thousands of prisoners of war and internees whom it was planned to send there from Central Java but did not make contact with the Indonesian Republican authorities in the city. According to Wing-Commander Tull, who worked for the RAPWI Organisation in Central Java, four trainloads of prisoners of war and internees were sent to Surabaya, totalling 1,800 people, 900 of whom were from the camps at Banjoebiroe. These had priority for evacuation within Central Java because sanitation and hygiene there were worse than in the camps at Ambarawa. After this first influx, fighting broke out in Surabaya between Japanese and Indonesians. The Indonesians eventually assumed complete control and disarmed the Japanese. In addition to those who had been evacuated to Surabaya by the British, 1,000 internees went there from all over Java under their own arrangements. As a result of their seizure of power from the Japanese, the Indonesian Republican authorities in Surabaya were able to assert their authority over the internees and others. Europeans, Eurasians, Ambonese and Menadonese were forbidden access to bazaars and public transport. Their property, it was declared, would be liable to confiscation.

Despite the threats to minority groups in Surabaya, it seems that there was now a resumption of evacuation from Central Java. In a report on prisoners of war and internees in Java, Lieutenant-Colonel Eggleton of the RAPWI Organisation wrote that 3,660 'convalescent patients' were moved from Semarang, Ambarawa and Magelang to Surabaya but that the 'outbreak of disturbances' made further transfers impossible.[1] It is likely that he was referring to the later hostilities between the British-Indian and Indonesian forces rather than the earlier hostilities between the Indonesians and the Japanese as the figure which he gives of 3,660 internees is much greater than the 1,800 mentioned by Wing-Commander Tull. It would seem,

therefore, that two large moves of internees from Central Java were carried out, one before the outbreak of Japanese–Indonesian hostilities and the second before the outbreak of hostilities between British-Indian and Indonesian forces. Adding together the above totals, the 1,800 internees moved in the initial phase, 1,000 who went to Surabaya from all over Java and 3,660 internees who were moved in the second phase, one arrives at a figure of 6,460 internees. This corresponds to the total number of internees the British claimed to have evacuated in early November before the reoccupation of the city. There were three hospitals in Surabaya to care for the internees. It was planned that a British force would arrive in the city as soon as possible to protect and then evacuate them.

Surabaya was where the best-equipped Indonesian forces were located. If there was to be a 'showdown' between British and Indonesians, it would be here. That Indonesian forces in East Java were so well equipped was largely a result of an act of folly on the part of a Dutch naval officer, Captain Huijer, who went into Surabaya in September with permission from Admiral Helfrich, the Commander of Dutch forces in the Indies, and General Van Oyen, the Commander of the KNIL, but without British permission, to take the Japanese surrender. Helfrich and Van Oyen believed this would augment Dutch prestige. Captain Huijer told Lieutenant-General Nagano, the Commander of Japanese 16th Army, that he had been sent by Mountbatten. This was untrue. The Japanese troops duly paraded on the airfield and laid down their weapons. They also handed over their tanks, artillery, anti-aircraft guns, transport and ammunition and then withdrew to Semarang. No sooner had the weapons been surrendered than a division of the Indonesian TKR descended on the airfield, seized the arms for themselves and imprisoned Captain Huijer. This was related to Christison by Nagano, when he subsequently arrived at Christison's Headquarters to surrender in October. He also told him about the military training that the Japanese had been giving to Indonesians and hinted at the difficulties the British might encounter if they were to carry out a military deployment in Surabaya: 'We have been training 7 Divisions of Indonesian soldiers who never saw the Dutch. Most of these Divisions are not formidable but the one in EAST JAVA is tough and well led. They will give you much trouble.'

Despite this warning, Christison decided he would press ahead with the occupation of Surabaya on the same basis as the British deployment in West and Central Java. Dangerously small formations would be sent into the heart of potentially hostile territory, to be reinforced as and when possible. For the occupation of Surabaya, 49th Indian Infantry Brigade had been selected. This was part of a policy described by Christison as 'showing the flag'.[2] That he should have been prepared to send a single brigade into the second largest city in the Indies where the most powerful Indonesian armed forces were concentrated suggests either that he cared little for the men under his command or that he was naive enough not to rate highly the chances of an outbreak of hostilities. For 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, 'showing the flag' would cost it 427 casualties. For a force comprising approximately 4,000 men, this was a 10 per cent casualty rate.[3] Such a rate would demoralize a unit in time of war, let alone in a peacetime operation.

The arrival of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade at Surabaya

49th Indian Infantry Brigade arrived off Surabaya on 25 October 1945. Its Commander was Brigadier Mallaby. This was Mallaby's first operational command since early on in the Burma campaign.[4] It is not true to say, as J. G. A. Parrott does in his article on Mallaby's death, that his command of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade was his first 'operational command'. Nevertheless, Mallaby had been a Staff Officer for most of the war and had no recent experience of active command. His previous appointment had been as Director of Military Operations at General Headquarters, India, which was situated at Delhi. In this capacity, he had been one of Mountbatten's chief advisers during his time as Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia. Mallaby came to command 49th Indian Infantry Brigade during the final stages of its training in India. As Director of Military Operations, he had been a Major-General and had therefore dropped rank to take up his new position, his command of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade being intended to give him experience of command at different levels.[5]

Colonel Pugh, the Second-in-Command of the Brigade, was an officer with a distinguished record of active service. In 1943, he had led an 'unofficial' raid on Axis ships interned in neutral Goa which were sending details about Allied convoys in the Indian Ocean to U Boats. He and his party had put the ships out of action. He had commanded first 25th Mountain Regiment of the Royal Indian Artillery and then 33rd Indian Infantry Brigade in the Burma Campaign. He had seen action at Kohima, Imphal and the crossing of the Irrawaddy. Thereafter, the British had formed wandering units which were to attack any enemy detachments they came across and generally confuse the Japanese. Pugh had commanded one of these. He had been awarded a DSO and bar.[6] His strong personality aroused different emotions. Some officers recall him with fondness. Captain Wright, the Brigade Transport Officer on the Staff of 9th Indian Infantry Brigade, which came to Surabaya in early November as part of 5th Indian Division to reinforce 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, recalls that he was 'a real action man'.[7] Major Henstock, a company commander in 5/6th Rajputana Rifles, one of the battalions making up 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, comparing him with Mallaby, says that Pugh was 'a bit of a fire eater' whereas Mallaby was 'more relaxed'. His affection for Pugh is reflected in his calling him 'a good stick'.[8]

It is possible that the relationship between Brigadier Mallaby and Colonel Pugh at the time of the Brigade's arrival at Surabaya was poor. If so, that cannot have helped the co-ordination of British policy during the early days of the occupation. In the papers of A. J. F. Doulton in the National Army Museum is a letter to him from J. A. Mellsop. In October 1945, both Doulton and Mellsop were Lieutenant-Colonels on the Staff of 23rd Indian Division in Batavia. Doulton went on to write a history of the Division, published in 1951. Mellsop went on to command 36th Indian Infantry Brigade in December 1945. He writes: 'I remember being told at the time that Pugh and Mallaby were scarcely on speaking terms. Having commanded 6 Mahratta in Mallaby's Brigade for a short time in India, I knew him

to be a kindly and considerate Commander; likeable and a gentleman. A very different character to Pugh.'[9] Letters from Pugh to his wife given to the author by the latter indicate that he was a 'firebrand'. This lends credence to the idea of he and Mallaby being on bad terms. The following is an example, in a letter written from Barrackpore in India in July 1942, of Pugh's sentiments:

> A clean sweep, a ruthless hunting out of inefficiency in fact, and not only in speech; and that promptly, is required. No further dallying and procrastination, but the replacement of inefficiency and age by fire and youth. What matter if people are impetuous; their fire and gallantry will make up their errors, the flame they kindle will bring forth a response sufficient to bridge the gap … It is disastrous and tragic to see all round the dying of the flame, extinguished by a top heavy system, and the passionate desire of those carrying this flame to do something progressive.[10]

It is not certain what British long-term plans were in relation to Surabaya prior to the arrival of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade. That there was a task to accomplish in the short term, namely the evacuation of internees and Japanese Surrendered Personnel, is not in question: that was the reason for the Brigade being there. What is not certain is whether there was an intention to hold the city until Dutch forces could relieve the British. During the course of the British occupation of Indonesia, both courses of action were followed. Batavia, Buitenzorg and Bandung in West Java, Semarang in Central Java and Surabaya itself were all held until the arrival of Dutch forces during the course of 1946. Ambarawa and Magelang, by contrast, in the interior of Central Java, were both abandoned at the end of 1945 once the internees had been sent to Semarang on the coast.

Captain Douglas Macdonald, Mallaby's Intelligence Officer, approached by the author, has set down his reminiscences of the occupation of Surabaya in an eight-page manuscript. This contains many original reflections and insights into the conduct of operations in Surabaya from someone who was as close to Brigadier Mallaby as it was possible to be. Captain Macdonald is firmly of the belief that it was not part of Mallaby's mission to hold Surabaya for the Dutch. He recalls being briefed by Mallaby in Malaya, prior to the Brigade's departure for Surabaya:

> [Mallaby] called all the officers in the Brigade to a meeting to tell us what our orders were. 1, We were to enter Soerabaja and negotiate with the locals the evacuation of all Dutch civilians and get them on board ship to take them back to Holland. 2, We were to evacuate all our prisoners of war held by the Japs and 3, take the Japanese army prisoner and wait for ships to take them away. After which we would be free to go home.

It was suggested to him that the British mission in Surabaya might have involved holding the city pending the return of the Dutch. He denied this:

> This is news to me and nothing of that kind in October 1945 was ever mentioned. Had the officers of the Brigade been given such orders there would have been an outcry. I am not saying that there would have been a mutiny but the messes would have been abuzz with remarks such as why should we be doing the Dutch's dirty work for them?[11]

It is also important to note, in support of this interpretation, that, in early December 1945, Mountbatten proposed the evacuation of Surabaya and Semarang in order to release troops to reinforce West Java.[12] This indicates that Mountbatten did not regard Surabaya as a city which had to be held pending the return of the Dutch.

The convoy of ships containing 49th Indian Infantry Brigade Headquarters and the leading battalions arrived at Surabaya on 25 October 1945. HMS *Waveney*, with Brigadier Mallaby and Captain Macdonald on board, arrived shortly after sunrise. The troopships were to arrive that afternoon. According to Macdonald, he and Mallaby surveyed the docks from the deck of the *Waveney*: 'what we saw were a lot of agitated natives dashing about. They were armed to the teeth with bandoliers of ammo, tommy guns, rifles, grenades, swords and anything else portable you care to think of.' Macdonald then records an exchange with the Brigadier:

> Mallaby said, still looking through his glasses, 'do you think we can take a place this size with one brigade?'
>
> 'No, sir.'
>
> 'Neither do I … We shall have to pussyfoot our way in and you shall be pussy. Go below and take off what you've got on and replace it with Sam Brown etcetera and go ashore.'
>
> 'What! Unarmed?'
>
> 'Yes. We come in peace. I want you to bring back the military commander and the civilian head of the city with whom I wish to parley.'

The Intelligence Officer, accompanied, on the insistence of the Captain of HMS *Waveney*, by a naval officer, was taken into Surabaya. He met Dr Moestopo, the principal Indonesian leader in the city and head of the local TKR, the Tentara Keamanan Rakyat, or 'People's Security Army', the official armed force of the Indonesian Republic, whose personnel were Japanese-trained.[13] Moestopo was by profession a dentist. During the Japanese occupation, he had been arrested by the Kempeitai; his large build and strong features had led them to believe that he was a Eurasian. On release, he had sought out and received military training from the Japanese. Benedict Anderson calls him an 'eccentric, flamboyant man given to mysticism'.[14] According to Macdonald, their meeting was not propitious:

> [Moestopo] did nothing but shout me down … Did I think he was such a fool as to meet Mallaby and never be seen again? We were there to put

> the Dutch back, we were there to disarm them, we were white and not to be trusted and so on and on and boringly on until I asked to see the civilian governor, when he couldn't be quick enough to get rid of me.[15]

The 'civilian governor' was Dr Soerio, the Indonesian Governor of East Java. Soerio had been a prominent conservative nationalist leader before the war. During the Japanese occupation, he had been rapidly promoted for his administrative efficiency and his willingness to co-operate with the military government.[16] Soerio told Macdonald that he had been brave to come ashore unarmed; Moestopo had apparently wanted him and the naval officer shot and thrown into the sea in sight of the ship. In reply, Macdonald told him that the British had come in peace, would carry out their tasks and would then go away but that, if anything happened to either him or his naval companion, the British would 'put the city to the sword'. He then invited Soerio to come back and meet Mallaby on board ship. Soerio telephoned Moestopo in an effort to persuade him to join him. Moestopo refused, and forbad Soerio to go himself. At this point, a man burst into the room stating that there were ships on the horizon. Soerio asked Macdonald if they were British. Macdonald replied that they were. At this, Soerio said: 'Then I'll send you back to your ship. Thank you for coming to see me. I believe you but Moestopo doesn't.' The Intelligence Officer duly returned to the ship and told Mallaby everything that had happened. Mallaby apparently promised him a DSO in recognition of what he had done: 'I risked your life in getting the information I needed. I can now take this place without a shot being fired on either side.'[17]

From this account, it is not clear what information Mallaby could have gained to make him confident of taking over Surabaya peacefully. The only positive point that Macdonald reported was the fact that Soerio was not ill disposed towards the British. He would also have reported the hostile attitude of Moestopo, which Mallaby can hardly have found encouraging. It would be surprising to conclude that, because two unarmed officers could safely enter and leave, the city could be occupied.

The significance of Macdonald's mission is dismissed out of hand by Colonel Pugh, who did not arrive in Surabaya until the afternoon with the convoy of ships. He wrote an account of the occupation of Surabaya in the *Journal of the Royal Artillery* for 1948 which he subsequently revised.[18] Pugh says that Indonesians demanded, as soon as Mallaby's ship arrived in the harbour, that the landing of troops be postponed 'until they had had time to consult their president in Batavia.' To this, Mallaby was said to have replied that he would land troops 'irrespective of any consultations or decisions which might be reached by them in Batavia or Soerabaja.' He apparently invited the Indonesians to send representatives on board ship to discuss 'the future relationship', that is, the relationship between British and Indonesian forces in the city, but was refused. Pugh says: 'The attempt of the Brigade Intelligence Officer, who had been sent into the town to make contact with the Republican Government was equally fruitless.'[19] Pugh appears to place Macdonald's visit to the town after Mallaby's decision to land troops. It is possible

that he was unaware of the chronology or reversed it. He may have wanted to emphasise his own role, to be examined shortly, in bringing about a *modus vivendi* with local Indonesian leaders.

The Brigade War Diaries state that the Intelligence Officer and the naval officer went into Surabaya in the morning, between 9.00 am and 12.30 pm, and that Mallaby then signalled that he was landing troops and would occupy the town. 'Signal received "Do NOT land until we receive orders from Dr. Moestopo". Brig. replied, "We take orders from no one". First tps landed 1515 hrs.'[20] In this respect, they support Macdonald's chronology and version of events.

What is not in question is the fact that the military occupation of the city by troops of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade began during the afternoon of 25 October. The British had selected a number of objectives which were to be occupied. These included a radio station and public service installations which it was feared the Indonesians might sabotage. Companies of troops landed and moved off, 'bayonets fixed, rifles loaded and ready'.[21] This description by Colonel Pugh does not square with the impression given to the Indonesians by Macdonald of a force coming in peace. Similarly, Major Henstock, a company commander in 5/6th Rajputana Rifles, recalls receiving instructions of a belligerent nature that day from Mallaby on board HMS *Waveney*: 'My orders were to proceed into Surabaya and secure a position. Anyone not in Allied uniform and carrying arms was to be shot.'[22]

Surabaya presented a similar picture to that presented by Batavia when British troops had arrived there almost a month earlier. Nationalistic slogans were everywhere: 'Remember the Atlantic Charter'; 'We Will Purchase Our Freedom With Our Blood' and 'Merdeka'. The general impression was of dilapidation. The Japanese had neglected the city and the newly constituted Indonesian municipal authorities had apparently done little to improve matters.[23]

It appears that Mallaby's tactic of pushing ahead with the occupation of Surabaya paid off at first. The Brigade War Diaries and Pugh's account both state that, once Advanced Brigade Headquarters had been established on land, a deputation of Indonesians arrived to arrange discussions.[24] This has been described by Pugh. The deputation was headed by Dr Sugiri, a representative of Dr. Moestopo. He approached Colonel Pugh. He asked him why the British had come to Surabaya and whether they had brought any Dutch personnel with them. In reply, Pugh explained that the British mission in Surabaya was to evacuate the Japanese and the internees and assured Sugiri that there were no Dutch nationals in the Brigade.

That evening – the evening of 25 October – Pugh and two other officers went into Surabaya on Mallaby's orders to visit Dr. Moestopo. At their meeting, Pugh outlined the tasks of the British forces in Surabaya. He said that the British did not intend to interfere in the affairs of the Indonesian Republic and that no officials of the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Organisation or any other Dutch were accompanying the force. NICA, as has been stated earlier, was supposed to re-establish Dutch civil administration under the protection of the British forces in the areas which were to be handed over to the Dutch. Pugh told Moestopo that the question of disarmament should be discussed with Mallaby. Moestopo and his

colleagues appeared to be content at what they had heard and the tension abated. Moestopo told Pugh that, as leader of the local TKR, he required no assistance in maintaining law and order and informed him with a smile that the Japanese had been disarmed and their weapons distributed. In this exchange, it is possible to discern both a British desire to be apolitical and Indonesian defensiveness about the authority of the new Republic. A meeting between Mallaby and Moestopo was arranged for the next day.

This meeting duly took place the next morning – 26 October. A number of Indonesian officials were present, among whom was Dr Soerio, and some senior British military and naval officers. Mallaby explained the tasks allotted to his Brigade. On the question of disarmament, on which hinged the whole basis of Anglo–Indonesian co-operation in Surabaya, Mallaby suggested that regular Indonesian units, that is, the Police and the Army, should retain their arms but that they should disarm the general public so as to prevent possible attacks on Allied personnel. According to Pugh, Moestopo first complained that this would weaken Indonesian ability to resist the Dutch but eventually agreed.[25] The Brigade War Diaries also point to the mood of Indonesians at this meeting: 'Very cooperative but inclined to be suspicious. Very insistent NO Dutch came in.' It was established that the British would evacuate all internees and Japanese Surrendered Personnel, and that Working Committees, consisting of British and Indonesians, would organize the maintenance of law and order and the evacuation itself.[26]

The dropping of leaflets and the outbreak of fighting

An unorthodox but workable agreement had been reached between British and Indonesian leaders in Surabaya, the most volatile and – for the British – the most dangerous part of Java. In order for it to have any chance of success, it was essential that no contrary messages be sent from Divisional Headquarters in Batavia.

On the afternoon of 26 October, according to a diary kept by Pugh known as 'Soerabaja Diary', Major-General Hawthorn, the Commander of 23rd Indian Division, sent the order: 'Do not parley occupy town'.[27] If this is true, it seems possible that Hawthorn knew about the negotiations with local Indonesian leaders but did not appreciate that on them hinged the successful outcome of the mission. The agreement reached by 'parley' could not be reneged on without serious loss of face for both the commanders of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade and for the local Indonesian leaders. As for his injunction to occupy Surabaya, this had been Mallaby's intention and was at that time being carried out on his orders.

On 26 October, when the Brigade secured its positions in Surabaya, Divisional Headquarters dropped leaflets over West and Central Java. These leaflets demanded that all Indonesians surrender their arms within 48 hours or be shot, and were signed by General Hawthorn. Such terms ran contrary to the agreement just reached in Surabaya between Mallaby and Moestopo. In his account, Pugh claims that a signal was sent to Divisional Headquarters asking for the leaflets not to be dropped

over Surabaya, although he does not say who sent this signal. Whether the signal was ever received is not known, but what is certain is that it was not acted on. On the morning of 27 October, a Dakota aircraft from Batavia appeared over Surabaya dropping the very same leaflets that had been dropped over West and Central Java the previous day.[28]

It is well known that the Indonesian nationalist movement was divided between advocates of *diplomasi*, – negotiation with the Allies – and those who favoured *perdjuangan* – armed confrontation. Sjahrir, the Indonesian Prime-Minister, based in Allied-occupied Batavia, favoured negotiation, largely because he was confronted with the reality of Allied military power in the city. Tan Malaka and other radical Indonesian leaders, based in Yogyakarta far away from the Allied presence, could advocate their belief in the necessity for armed struggle.[29] It is possible to see a *diplomasi-perdjuangan* parallel in the case of Hawthorn and Mallaby. Hawthorn, comfortably ensconced in Batavia where the situation was under control, could take a tough line on the question of arms. Mallaby, on the ground in Surabaya and confronted with the best trained and armed Indonesian forces, had to take a conciliatory line.

There is a considerable divergence of opinion about the significance of the leaflet drop among British officers at Divisional Headquarters and those serving with 49th Indian Infantry Brigade on the ground in Surabaya. In his history of 23rd Indian Division, Doulton downplays the episode:

> It has sometimes been made out that the dropping of the leaflets was the prime cause of the rising at Surabaya. That is not true. No disturbances ever occurred after the issue of the proclamations in other places, nor was there any reason to expect trouble over their issue in Surabaya. The drop undoubtedly afforded the Indonesians a pretext of which they made full use, but the real causes of the rising lie deeper.

Doulton then states that there was a struggle for power in Surabaya between 'moderates' and 'extremists' and that the 'extremist' leaders, armed with Japanese weapons, 'had decided on an armed rising from the moment we [the British] landed'.[30] This interpretation is contested by, for example, Colonel Doyle, the Commander of 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry, who was in Surabaya throughout the fighting. Commenting on Doulton's account, Doyle has written:

> Clearly he [Doulton] does not wish to say that the dropping of those leaflets was a mistake and that they were the immediate cause of the fighting … In 49 Brigade, there was no doubt that the leaflet drop had set off the fighting. They were very much aware that they had been lucky to escape disaster and were angry with Divisional HQ. I remember the anger and bitterness that was felt at the time. Feelings were running so high that John Mellsop the GSO I at Div HQ paid a special visit to the Brigade and tried to calm things down … He did not get on with the brigade 2nd

in Command Colonel L. H. O. Pugh and they crossed swords over the leaflet drop.[31]

The bitterness that was felt by the officers of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade is readily understood if it is accepted that the leaflet drop precipitated hostilities. It is also clear that there was resentment against Hawthorn personally among the officers of the Brigade. Readers of Doulton's history might be forgiven for thinking that General Hawthorn was held in high esteem, even affection, by his subordinates and by the men of the Division. Since Doulton was on the Staff of the Division, his book might perhaps be subtitled *The View From Divisional Headquarters*. Another picture of General Hawthorn is substantially different from that given in this work. Loathed by his subordinate commanders, Hawthorn has been described as rarely straying further than the bar of the officer's mess. Colonel Pugh's widow, for example, has asserted to the author that Hawthorn was not averse to women and drink.[32] A junior officer in the Division has stated to the author that Hawthorn was a 'pompous sod' and 'a typical blown-up wartime general' and that he had 'less than no time for him'.[33] It is clear from their testimony that a number of the officers of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade imagined Hawthorn as so unconcerned with the situation in Surabaya that he either ignored the warning which he received from the Brigade on 26 October or that he never even saw it and left it to a subordinate to authorize the leaflet drop. Captain Macdonald felt sure about what had happened: 'Hawthorn has to carry the can … but some underling must have given the order without bothering to find out what the actual position was … Hawthorn was useless. He was only interested in … his mistresses and Dirk Bogarde kept him supplied.'[34] Bogarde, the future film star, was a Captain in the Indian Army and Hawthorn's Aide-de-Camp.[35]

As it was, the leaflets were dropped at a time when the Brigade was deployed in small units all over the city. If there was to be a change of mood on the part of radical Indonesians, it could not have been in a weaker position to repel their assaults. Captain Macdonald claims that he broke the news of the leaflet drop to Mallaby by rushing into his office:

'There's a Dakota overhead, sir, dropping leaflets. Do you know anything about it?'

'No. Fetch me a translation of it.'

I got hold of our liaison officer to translate and he handed the translation to me and what it said ruined everything Mallaby had achieved: 'You will hand over your arms 48 hours after receiving this notice.'

I handed Mallaby the translation and nothing was said as I stood in front of him for the longest three minutes I have ever spent waiting for his reaction. I broke the silence.

'What are you going to do, sir?'

'Obey orders.'

> 'But you can't, sir. You have given your word as a British officer and a representative of the King Emperor that we are here not to disarm them but to do what the committees are now doing and then we depart.'
>
> I pleaded with him for about five minutes and then quite quietly and without any rasp in his voice he said, 'Who is commanding this Brigade? You or I?'
>
> That question brought me up short and I realized at once that I had stepped way beyond what he had allowed me in our relationship and I apologized at once with the thought that if I upset him bang would go my gong.[36]

Moestopo met Mallaby at his Headquarters. Mallaby explained that the leaflets had been dropped without his knowledge but that he now had no alternative but to enforce the orders which he had received from Major-General Hawthorn, his Commanding Officer. He asked Moestopo to appreciate his predicament and to broadcast to the people of Surabaya, appealing to them to remain calm. This Moestopo promised; he then unaccountably disappeared.

There is a sense that Indonesians in Surabaya now fell back on a pre-arranged plan. The amicable relations which Mallaby and Pugh had established had only served to put these plans on hold. With the dropping of the leaflets, Indonesian suspicions had been triggered and they prepared for armed confrontation. In the docks, Indonesian stevedores downed tools and left. There were reports of Indonesian troop movements and of the removal of stores and ammunition across the Wonokromo Bridge southwards out of the city. A Japanese medium tank was seen towing six heavily laden trucks, presumably loaded with ammunition and equipment. During the night of the 27–28 October, propaganda poured out of the Indonesian radio station in Surabaya. Indonesians were called upon to rise up and drive the British into the sea. It was claimed that the British intended to render the Indonesians helpless before handing the country over to the Dutch. Dutch women and children, a large number of whom were in the south of Surabaya, were threatened with 'rape, torture and butchery'.[37]

Despite the alarming turn of events, nothing appears to have been done to regroup the Brigade so that it might be better positioned to resist an Indonesian attack. 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry, one of the battalions making up the Brigade, landed in Surabaya on 27 October, the same day that the leaflets were dropped. Its Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Doyle, recalls a meeting with Mallaby on arrival:

> I went ashore to Bde HQ in the docks and reported to the Comd Brig Mallaby who briefed me on the situation. I cannot remember any of the detail but he certainly did not mention the situation as being 'tense'. However, there seemed to be armed Indonesians everywhere. Strange that civilians were carrying weapons, and strange that they were obviously not keen to display their presence because individuals withdrew into cover

> or into the shadowed darkness, as I approached or passed by. There was a palpable air of menace about the place.

The next day, 28 October, the battalion disembarked. Most of the battalion went in transport to the Marine School in the south east part of the city, but Lieutenant-Colonel Doyle detached 'B' Company to protect Brigade Headquarters. When the bulk of the battalion arrived at the School, a platoon was detached to protect the radio station in that area.[38] The Commanding Officer is critical of this move and of the deployment of the Brigade as a whole at this time:

> the rising tide of violence was so manifest that he [Mallaby] must surely have recognised that a crisis was developing. The troops in the isolated positions should have been withdrawn into their main bodies. Instead, they were left where they were and were surrounded by mobs and destroyed. Even the last battalion of the Brigade (4 Mahrattas) – approximately 1/3rd of the Brigade strength – arriving on the very day of the rising, instead of being held back in reserve and consequently being available to affect the situation, was despatched to the far end of the town where it was just in time to be surrounded and trapped like the rest of the Brigade.[39]

In addition to not altering the disposition of his troops, Mallaby did nothing to mollify Indonesian opinion on the ground despite the fact that the dropping of the leaflets had, at the very least, exposed the British to a charge of bad faith. On the contrary, he seems to have been provocative. On 28 October, the day after the dropping of the leaflets, he set about requisitioning Indonesian vehicles in a heavy-handed manner. This is recorded in the Brigade War Diaries: 'Col. Pugh commanding Sub Area [presumably acting on Mallaby's orders] ordered each Bn and 3 Ind Fd Regt to stop and seize 12 cars each. Indonesian occupants very angry.'[40] The Indonesian response is also recalled by Colonel Doyle:

> The Indonesians had apparently agreed to hand over … cars, and, when these were not quickly provided, our troops were sent into the streets, stopped … cars at random, removed the occupants and took possession. I was very disturbed when I heard of this action and even now after all these years I find it difficult to believe that we acted in this way. You can imagine how the news of this action, enlarged and distorted, went eddying through the streets.[41]

The same day, 28 October, the British began the evacuation of women and children from the camp at Goebeng to Dharmo Barracks, where they could be properly looked after prior to their evacuation. It is questionable how sensible

this was given that the understanding between British and Indonesians had broken down and that unrest was likely. There was a very real danger that the women and children would be attacked by Indonesian 'extremists'.

A rumour was circulated in the kampongs that Moestopo, whom the British still could not find, had been murdered by the British.[42] The Brigade Intelligence Officer recalls being sent out by Brigadier Mallaby during the morning and encountering 'a sullen population. The people did not harass me but what I found particularly strange was that there was no laughter nor trading going on anywhere'.[43] Indonesian troops moved into position, covering each British position with a superior force. Members of the Black Buffaloes, an Indonesian paramilitary group, went around the kampongs 'inciting the masses to rise against the British, murder the Dutch, and bathe Soerabaja in a sea of blood'. They filled people with fear about what Indian troops would do to them. Indonesian civilians were organized into groups, each of which was ordered to go to its allotted station when the time should come.

At 4.20 pm, shots were fired south of Simpang. The British regarded this as the pre-arranged signal for the fighting to begin.[44] All over Surabaya, British positions were attacked. Many British officers have recalled the moment when open hostility finally erupted. Macdonald was with Mallaby, reporting on his morning's findings. He told him he was worried everything was so quiet:

> 'They are up to something. I expect the bubble to burst at any minute.'
>
> Mallaby grinned at me. 'What's the matter, Douglas? Got the wind up? What the hell's that noise?'
>
> 'The bubble's burst, sir.'
>
> As I said this a burst of machine gun fire shattered the window of the room and a very senior officer and a junior one hit the floor and wriggled out of the room, prone, to avoid the ricochets.[45]

Lieutenant-Colonel Doyle, the Commanding Officer of 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry was settling into his new quarters in and around the Marine School and was beginning to relax in the company of his officers when it became clear that trouble was brewing:

> We selected one of the empty houses across the street to serve as a Mess and at about 5pm when everything at the School had been organised the British Officers were having a cup of tea in the 'Mess' before 'Stand To' (a procedure when all defences are fully manned until dusk when the order to 'Stand Down' is given and normal routine is resumed). The Adjutant had moved to the School before us to mount the Quarter Guard when the odd rifle shot could be heard. We considered this to be due to trigger-happy armed civilians, but soon there were more shots and closer to our location and then long bursts of fire. Something was up so we moved into the street back into the School and the battalion 'stood to' … fire was soon opened

> on us from the surrounding houses and the exchange of fire continued until darkness.[46]

49th Indian Infantry Brigade, whose strength was approximately 4,000 fighting men, was totally outnumbered, confronted by 20,000 trained Indonesian troops and, according to General Christison, a 'fanatical mob' of around 140,000 civilians. The 20,000 troops belonged to the TKR, the Indonesian regular army. They had been given a basic military training by the Japanese during the occupation. The Indonesians possessed tanks, armoured cars, light and heavy artillery and ample transport and supply services.[47] In the first 10 minutes of the attack, according to Colonel Pugh, 11 British officers and 44 Indian other ranks were killed.[48] According to Major Henstock, a number of the British officers had spent the war at Staff College and thought that they would be safe in a peacetime operation. Henstock had himself fought in Burma. He says that these officers had no experience of fighting and were killed because they did not know how to keep a low profile.[49]

Officers' memories of the fighting are vivid. Doyle, in the Marine School, recalls being ordered to send a company to rescue journalists trapped in a hotel. This patrol ran into opposition and a fire fight developed. 'Street fighting requires a large expenditure in ammunition because houses along both sides of the street have to be cleared, room by room. Our available ammunition was limited and there was no hope of replenishment. I therefore broke off this engagement and withdrew the company.' Doyle recalls speaking in Urdu with Pugh – a mutually intelligible language they thought Indonesians could not understand. The two planned an evacuation towards the docks across open country, although nothing came of this plan. Doyle also recalls the tactics employed by Indonesians, which he considers unorthodox. In this respect, his reflections are similar to those of other officers, related in Chapter 1, who served in West Java at this time:

> Towards the end of our occupation of the school, the Indonesians … adopted tactics which could have developed into a critical situation for us. On our side of the school was an open area. A play area I suppose. Beyond this area and running along the side of the street was a low wall – the school boundary I suppose. The Indos assembled a crowd of women and children along the length of the wall and urged them to cross the open space and enter the school. We were able to hold them off by various means but they were getting bolder and bolder and advancing closer and closer to us. Had they managed to reach the school and enter the building they would have prevented us from using our weapons. It was a situation that was developing very awkwardly.

Fortunately for Doyle and his men and for the Indonesian women and children, the fighting was brought to a close before such an eventuality came about.[50]

A convoy of lorries ferrying women and children from Goebeng to Dharmo was ambushed at a roadblock. The Mahrattas escorting the convoy did their best

to defend the women and children and inflicted many casualties on the attackers but they were in an impossible position.[51] A Dutch woman, Mrs Van Hannem, has vivid recollections of the ambush: 'Soon the trucks were riddled with bullets and screams and groans could be heard from each truck. The air was heavy with powder fumes.' The woman next to her was hit in an artery but the bleeding was stopped by applying a tourniquet. No sooner had this been done than her leg was 'completely torn off' because it had been hit by a dum dum bullet. 'The shooting lasted for four hours, without a pause, and all around we heard the screams of the dying women and children.' Most of the women and children and the escorting troops were killed. A few women and children were escorted to some houses by a few of the troops. This group was eventually rescued by a British patrol and taken to Dharmo Hospital. Other women and children, among whom were Mrs Van Hannem and her son, were captured by the attacking Indonesians. One of the Indonesian leaders summoned the occupants of the truck in which they had been travelling to get out and go to a nearby kampong. Mrs Van Hannem and her son got out, upon which the boy was struck on the head with an axe. 'Soon the upper part of his body was wet with blood and I fell on my knees, beseeching them to let him live, a boy of thirteen years.' The Indonesian riposte was to fire several shots at him. Mother and son were then taken into a nearby kampong. At the same time, the other internees were ordered out of the trucks: 'one old man was beaten to death before his wife's eyes. Later I heard she too had been murdered'.

Mrs Van Hannem and her son and the other survivors were taken through the nearby kampong, where the inhabitants threatened to kill them. They were brought to a small building and were locked up in a room. Indonesians wrote on the door of the room where they were being held: 'Look out, Dutch dogs are imprisoned here.' At one point, an Indonesian guard came in 'with a broad grin to tell us we would be killed in the morning. I don't think one of us will forget this night'. Mrs Van Hannem and her son, who survived despite the wounds he had received, managed to escape after several days.[52]

Fighting continued all over Surabaya on 29 October. Troops of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade defended positions until they ran out of ammunition, when they were overwhelmed and massacred. One enduring memory for Major Henstock is hearing the screams of his comrades over the radio as their positions were overrun by Indonesians and they were killed. Brigade Headquarters were cut off.[53]

When Christison was informed by Hawthorn of developments in Surabaya, he sent for Sukarno and asked him to intervene, to go to Surabaya and stop the fighting. Sukarno arrived in Surabaya on 29 October, met Mallaby and agreed a truce. Its terms were announced over the radio.[54] The British obeyed its terms but, according to Pugh, the Indonesians did not. He alleges that they fired at ambulances trying to evacuate the wounded and continued to attack British positions.[55] General Hawthorn arrived in Surabaya on 30 October and met Sukarno and Mallaby. At their meeting, it was agreed that the Brigade would regroup. Surabaya would be divided into three zones. The British would occupy the dock area and the airfield in the north and the area of the camps in the south until the internees had been evacuated; the

Indonesians would hold the centre of the city and would stay clear of the British-occupied areas. Sukarno and Hawthorn returned to Batavia.[56] All that remained was for the agreement to be implemented.

The death of Brigadier Mallaby

Of all the episodes in the Battle of Surabaya and indeed in the whole of the British occupation of Indonesia, the death of Brigadier Mallaby has attracted the greatest interest from scholars. In particular, there have been two articles, mentioned already, devoted exclusively to the subject. Despite this, it is the belief of the present author that this key episode, in particular Mallaby's character and motivations, have been misrepresented. Consequently, there follows a detailed account using new sources and offering a new interpretation.

Following the cease-fire agreement negotiated by Hawthorn, Mallaby and Sukarno, a rumour began to circulate that the British had surrendered. Indonesians demanded that British troops lay down their weapons. This demand brought about a resumption of fighting in most areas of the city. Mallaby went to Bank Square, where a company of 6/5th Mahrattas were defending the International Bank Building, and managed to stop the fighting there. On returning to his Headquarters, he sent his Brigade Major and another officer to deliver a note of protest about the state of affairs to the Indonesian Headquarters, which was only 300 yards away. These two officers were waylaid and killed by Indonesian 'extremists'.[57]

Unaware of the fate of these two officers, Mallaby decided to return to Bank Square that evening to bring about an end to further fighting which had broken out.[58] Pugh warned him not to go. Pugh had been seconded to the Indian police in Bengal and had experience of crowd control.[59] In his opinion, Mallaby had become very concerned about the prospect of a military disaster in Surabaya. Pugh also says that Mallaby was 'tired and jaded' and that 'his judgment had become unbalanced'.[60] In contrast, Captain Laughland, the Liaison Officer of 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry on the Brigade Staff, who was with Mallaby when he was killed, has said, on being interviewed by the author, that Mallaby was not tired when he set out on the evening of 30 October to implement the cease-fire agreement.[61] Macdonald has asserted to the author that Brigadier Mallaby was 'a brilliant negotiator', that he had had the Indonesians 'eating out of the palm of his hand' during the initial negotiations of 26 October and that it was the belief that only he could settle matters that prompted him to set out on such a hazardous mission.[62] Brigadier Mallaby travelled in one car with two of his Liaison Officers, Captain Laughland and Captain Smith, and Captain Shaw, the Field Security Officer. Other cars were occupied by local Indonesian leaders considered to be 'moderates'. These were the Mohameds – a married couple – Roeslan Abdulgani, Dirman Soedirman, Sungkono, Doel Armowo, and Saudara Kundan, 'an Indian leader and interpreter'.[63]

The convoy arrived in the Square. There was a large crowd. The Indonesian leaders accompanying Brigadier Mallaby addressed the crowd, explaining the terms

of the cease-fire agreement that had been reached at the conference between Mallaby, Hawthorn and Sukarno. The crowd seemed contented. Members of the group got back into their cars and the convoy moved off towards the bridge to continue touring the city. Before it could reach the bridge, it was stopped by the volume of people who, by this time, had become hostile. Captain Smith asserted in a report on the incident that the 'mob leaders' were Japanese. Captain Laughland, in another report, expressed the view that at least one of the leaders was Japanese. By this time, the local Indonesian leaders with the British party had become ineffective as mediators. Demands were made by the Indonesian crowd that the Mahrattas in the Bank Building lay down their weapons, in return for which they and, according to Captain Smith, Brigadier Mallaby and his entourage, would be guaranteed safe conduct to the airfield, a British-held area on the coast.[64]

There are from this point onwards substantial differences between the accounts of the three officers who were with Brigadier Mallaby, Captains Laughland, Smith and Shaw. All three reports were commissioned by the British Government as part of a re-examination of the death of Brigadier Mallaby. This had been prompted by a speech in the House of Commons by the back bench Labour MP Tom Driberg. He had asserted that he had spoken with officers who were present in the Square and stated that Mallaby 'was not murdered but was honourably killed in action'. He had said that Mallaby had given the order for the Mahrattas to open fire, thus breaking the truce. He had also said that Mallaby had been subsequently killed in his car 'although even now it is not absolutely certain whether he was killed by Indonesians or by a grenade thrown by an Indian officer at some Indonesians who were approaching his car which exploded simultaneously with the attack on him'.[65] The re-examination had also been prompted by the raising of the issue at a meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations at the same time.[66] The reports by Laughland and Smith are to be found in a War Office file in The National Archives in London. This file was declassified in 1996 on the request of John Springhall, who was preparing an article on the death of Brigadier Mallaby. Springhall states in this article that he had been unable to locate a report by Captain Shaw.[67] The author located this report in the file series FO 371, open for the past 25 years. It is Captain Shaw's report which differs substantially from those of Captains Smith and Laughland on crucial points. The result is to raise yet more questions about events in the Square leading up to the death of Mallaby.

The first difference occurs after the Indonesians demanded that the Mahrattas lay down their weapons. All reports agree on this. Captain Smith's account points to a breakdown in command on the British side:

> The Brigadier flatly refused to consider this proposal. After further pressure, however, Capt. Shaw, who was well known to some of the Indonesians through his job as FSO, and who had been under a considerable strain since our arrival in Sourabaya, agreed to the terms on his own responsibility. The Brigadier at once countermanded this: on further consideration he decided that the company had been in so

> bad a position before that any further fighting would lead to their being wiped out. He did not believe in the safe conduct in so far as it applied to us, but thought that some at least of the Company might get away. Accordingly, Capt. Shaw was sent in to the building to give the necessary orders.[68]

This account implies that the order was given by Mallaby for the Mahrattas to lay down their arms. In the statement by Captain Shaw, no breakdown in command is mentioned: 'Brigadier Mallaby was told by the crowd to surrender his troops in the Bank but he refused. They started to drag him over to the Bank but brought him back and dragged me over instead.'[69] Captain Laughland's account contains elements of both of the above versions. Like Captain Smith, he ascribes to Mallaby a desire to see the Mahrattas lay down their weapons in the hope that they might stand a chance of escape; like Captain Shaw, he states that the latter was taken to the Bank Building against his will but, possibly, with no explicit orders from Mallaby:

> About 5 o'clock the Brigadier decided that the Coy should come out without arms as some of them might have a chance to escape. The crowd wanted to take some us to the building to tell the Coy Commander the Brigadier's orders. The Brigadier said that the Coy Commander would not take orders from us as he was the Commanding Officer.
>
> The crowd got hold of Capt. Shaw and took him off to the building.[70]

While Captain Shaw was on his way to the building, Brigadier Mallaby and his two remaining Staff Officers were disarmed and made to sit in the back of their car. The only weapon that was retained was a grenade, which Captain Laughland kept hidden.[71]

It is not clear from the three accounts whether Captain Shaw went to the Bank Building with Brigadier Mallaby's sanction to order the Mahrattas to lay down their weapons (Smith), whether he was dragged there against his will either knowing that this was what Mallaby wanted (Laughland) or entirely without orders to communicate (Shaw).

According to Captain Shaw, no consideration was ever given to the possibility of leaving the Bank unarmed. Military action was resolved on from the start:

> I got into the Bank and the Coy Commander asked me the form. I told him to place his Coy in the most advantageous position in the building which would give the greatest fire power, and to await my word to fire. I told him I was acting under the orders of the Brigadier. I waited for about a quarter of an hour and then the crowd became very turbulent and started to gather around the building. I told the Coy Commander to be ready to fire. The Indonesians brought up a machine gun along the front of the building. The opening burst killed about 200 Indonesians in the square

and the rest dispersed. The area of the Brigadier's car was omitted from the arc of fire.[72]

According to Captain Smith, when Captain Shaw got into the Bank Building the Indonesians brought up a machine gun to cover the entrance. 'He and the Company Commander decided that any attempt to walk out unarmed would lead to a massacre, and so the order to open fire was given.'[73]

In preparing his article on the death of Brigadier Mallaby, J. G. A. Parrott corresponded with the Commander of 'D' Company of 6/5th Mahrattas, Major Venugopal, who told him that he had given the order to open fire.[74] This does not preclude the possibility that it was given at the instigation of Captain Shaw, as described above. It is worth noting that Major Venugopal would have given an order on the recommendation of Captain Shaw, an officer junior to him in rank, only if he believed that Captain Shaw was conveying the instructions of Brigadier Mallaby.

Captain Shaw fails to mention any such instructions from Mallaby. He only says: 'I told him [Major Venugopal] I was acting under the orders of the Brigadier'. He does not say that Mallaby had given him instructions to convey to the Mahratta company that it was not to surrender but was instead to continue to defend itself. Shaw may have misrepresented his authority, convincing Venugopal that he brought orders from Mallaby when no such orders had been issued. If this is so, he would have committed a breach of discipline.

Shaw and Venugopal did not immediately mount an offensive operation after the former had arrived in the bank, but their remaining there for a quarter of an hour when the Indonesians around the building were clearly waiting for them to come out must have aroused suspicions, firstly about the intentions of the Mahratta company in the bank and secondly about what were Mallaby's orders. Indonesian suspicions about British good faith may have prompted them again to attack the bank. This caused the Mahrattas to open fire which had fatal repercussions for Brigadier Mallaby and his two Staff Officers, still trapped inside the car.

If the three different reports are read together, a scenario emerges in which Captain Shaw's independence of action can be seen as prompting a renewal of the fighting during which Mallaby was to lose his life. It is possible that an official, reading all three reports, collected separately with no chance of the witnesses conferring to agree a standard version, saw that a measure of blame could be attached to Shaw and therefore removed his report from the file containing the reports of Smith and Laughland. If, with hindsight, Shaw was guilty of disobeying orders and thus with helping to bring about the circumstances that led to Mallaby's death, allowances have to be made for the extreme confusion of the moment, the danger and uncertainty with which the Mahrattas were faced and for the fact that Mallaby was a sitting target for any Indonesian bent on his assassination from the moment he arrived in the Square.

When fighting resumed around the bank, Mallaby, Smith and Laughland remained trapped inside the car. A man came up and fired four shots at close

range. Miraculously, none of the officers was hit. The battle outside went on for about two hours. During a lull in the firing, two men approached the car. They tried to push it away and failed. They then opened the petrol tank, causing Laughland to think that they were going to set fire to the car. In a resumption of firing, these men disappeared. They returned shortly thereafter and opened the car door where Mallaby was. He moved, and they saw that he was alive. He spoke to the men, asking to be taken to one of the party leaders. The two men went away to discuss this. One of them then came back. Mallaby spoke to him and the man answered, then drew a revolver and shot the Brigadier. Firing broke out once more and the two men ducked down by the car.[75] Smith and Laughland, still in the car, crouched on the floor, terrified. They tried to speak to Mallaby but could not obtain a response. Captain Laughland recalls today that he had never before been so close to a dead person.[76] He now gave the grenade, the only weapon the two officers possessed, to Captain Smith. The Indonesian who had killed the Brigadier reappeared at the window and fired another shot, which grazed Captain Laughland's shoulder. At the same time, Captain Smith threw the grenade out of the window. The two officers got out of the car on the opposite side to where Mallaby was lying, ran round it and headed for the Kali Mas river, which runs through the city from north to south. They dived in and made their way to the docks. Both officers state in their reports that they think that the grenade must have killed the two Indonesians by the car, also that the back seat of the car was on fire when they left.

Smith reported that he and Laughland spent five hours in the Kali Mas. Laughland, in his report, describes their experience most vividly. The intention in diving into the canal was try to get back to the dock area, where they knew there had been no fighting. The challenge was to do this unobserved.[77] Today, Laughland recalls hiding by barges to avoid detection.[78] Anyone familiar with the Kali Mas, which is a sluggish brown colour, will appreciate that five hours swimming through it can hardly have been pleasant. Laughland recalled in his report that, after an hour in the river, the two came across a ferry. They decided to stay still, as many people were 'moving about, sitting at the windows of their houses, smoking and talking'. They then moved on and got within the vicinity of the drawbridge. River craft and warehouses were on fire and the two decided that they would have to wait until these had died down as otherwise there would be too much light. They waited three hours. They then decided to take a chance and move off towards the docks. On reaching them, the two came under fire from their own troops. They told the troops to stop firing and that they were two officers from Brigade Headquarters. The troops told them to stay where they were. In due course Major Wilson, their company commander, came to them. The two officers were taken on board HMS *Waveney*.[79]

The survival of these officers was of vital importance in forming the official British view of what had happened to Brigadier Mallaby. Their testimony that the Brigadier had been shot in cold blood by an Indonesian naturally served to cause a sense of outrage, already stimulated by Indonesian atrocities towards soldiers and civilians during the fighting. An early report, made up largely of Captain

Laughland's recollections, was sent to Divisional Headquarters in Batavia, where it would have been passed on to General Christison at Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies.[80] Laughland was flown to Batavia, where he was questioned and where he compiled the full report, dated 3 November 1945, drawn on above.[81] Shaw, along with the surviving Mahrattas, got out of the bank the following day under the terms of the truce, to be related shortly. He was not questioned until March 1946. On 31 October, the day after the death of Mallaby, General Christison issued an ultimatum demanding the surrender of Mallaby's murderers or else there would be 'dire military retribution'.[82] This demand was made, albeit that Laughland had ventured the opinion in his account of events that the exploding grenade had killed both the men crouching by the car.

Historians have treated the death of Brigadier Mallaby differently. In *The Surrender of Japan*, Woodburn Kirby writes: 'The murder of Mallaby on the 30th October brought an already dangerous situation to a head as the news spread rapidly throughout Java.' By way of illustration, Woodburn Kirby goes on to relate how, in Surabaya, a demand made on 31 October that 49th Indian Infantry Brigade lay down its arms showed that the Indonesians believed that they had gained the upper hand, how there was an outbreak of fighting in Central Java and how there was a sharp increase in 'terrorist activity' in West Java.[83] Benedict Anderson, in his study of the Indonesian revolution on Java, is in agreement with Woodburn Kirby that Mallaby's death in Surabaya led to a worsening of the situation everywhere else on Java but gives a different reason for why this was:

> The death of the British general set the stage for the even more violent events that were to follow. British sympathies, hitherto somewhat on the Indonesian side, began to swing markedly toward the Dutch. The blow to Allied prestige, and the fear of what would happen if the example of Surabaja were followed elsewhere, especially in Central Java, where the situation was extremely tense, impelled the British to take drastic action.[84]

John Springhall, in his article on Mallaby's death, draws a different conclusion about its significance:

> Ultimately, Mallaby's death and the ensuing 'battle for Surabaya' encouraged SEAC to find ways of escape from the burdens of occupation by handing over their hard-won bridgeheads in Java to the Dutch. On 14 March 1946, Mountbatten told the British Chiefs of Staff that the re-entry of Dutch troops into Java, begun on 9 March, would continue as fast as ships could carry them.[85]

The present author takes a different view of the episode. The Battle of Surabaya was the turning point of the British occupation of Indonesia, the point at which the British lost all illusions about the difficult nature of their mission. The death of Mallaby was the single most serious and humiliating episode of that battle and

thus can be seen as the defining moment of the occupation, casting a shadow right up until the final departure of British forces in November 1946, as will be seen in subsequent chapters. Woodburn Kirby's assessment, mentioned above, is satisfactory up to a point: Mallaby's death may have encouraged Indonesian 'extremists' elsewhere in Java, but it also chastened those in Surabaya itself, as will be seen shortly. Anderson's assessment, similarly, is of limited value. He imagines the British and Dutch to be far closer at this stage than was actually the case. The tendency of scholars such as Anderson to imagine the British and Dutch forces as acting almost hand-in-glove has been remarked on in the introduction. Springhall's assessment will be reflected on more fully at the beginning of the next chapter. Let it be said here that it takes a very long view. In October 1945, substantial Dutch forces were nowhere to be seen. For the moment, the British were on their own. They would have to deal with challenges to their authority, such as the assassination of one of their Brigadiers, in their own way.

49th Indian Infantry Brigade regroups

With the death of Mallaby, command devolved on Pugh. During the night of 30–31 October, there were hopeful signs for the Brigade when Radio Surabaya broadcast messages to the Indonesians to stop fighting. But loud hailers in some areas of the city continued to incite Indonesians to violence. After midnight, the voice of 'Surabaya Sue' was heard. She was a British woman who had run a hotel on Bali before the war and been on intimate terms with one of the island's princely rulers, the Raja of Bangli, and his son, and been threatened with deportation by the Dutch authorities for 'immorality'. In 1941, she had entertained Duff Cooper, the British Minister of State for the Far East, and his wife. During the Japanese occupation, she had been imprisoned. After the proclamation of Indonesian independence, she had thrown in her lot with the nationalists in East Java, joining the staff of the Indonesian radio station in Surabaya. In her broadcasts, 'Surabaya Sue' urged Indonesians to stand firm against 'foreign aggression'. The night nevertheless passed peacefully.[86]

Although there was fighting the next day, Indonesian leaders stuck to the agreement which had been reached between Sukarno, Hawthorn and Mallaby. Lorries manned by troops of the TRI regrouped the Brigade to the north and the south of the city. The Brigade's next task was to move the women and children from Dharmo to the port, from where they could be evacuated by sea, and feed them as they had not obtained food since the beginning of hostilities. According to Pugh, the Indonesian authorities were obstructive when it came to moving supplies from the port through the city so the British resorted to air drops. But even here there were problems. The British predicament in Surabaya was still dangerous. The Dharmo area had been vigorously defended during the fighting and it was necessary to convince the Indonesians that only food and not ammunition was being dropped.[87] Accordingly, on 1 November, Pugh wrote to Soerio informing him of the drop that was to take place that afternoon. He suggested that he might

send along some of his officers so that they could observe that only food and not ammunition was being dropped.[88] But, according to standard British practice, ammunition was dropped. Pugh had to explain that it had been dropped contrary to his orders.[89] Luckily, nothing arose out of this further example of a breakdown in communications, reminiscent of the 'leaflet' episode.

The task of moving the women and children from one end of Surabaya to the other went ahead. Indian troops drove the lorries and troops of the TRI, the regular army of the Indonesian Republic, provided the escort. According to Pugh, these troops were frequently late or did not turn up at all but, by 6 November, over 6,050 women and children had been evacuated.[90] Their ordeal over, they were relieved to get on board the waiting ships and were grateful to the British for all that they had done for them.[91]

5th Indian Division arrives at Surabaya

At the same time as the women and children were being evacuated from Surabaya, 5th Indian Division was arriving, along with its Commander, Major-General Mansergh.[92] Mansergh was immensely popular with those under his command.[93] As well as 9,000 troops, 24 tanks were landed.[94] The War Diaries of 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry state that, when troops of 5th Indian Division began to land, they were kept in the dock area so that Indonesians might not discover their existence.[95] Presumably, it was felt that a discovery would lead to Indonesian retaliation and reprisals against those internees and military personnel still in their hands. Nothing was being left to chance. Where 49th Indian Infantry Brigade had been badly mauled, 5th Indian Division would overcome resistance by force of numbers. At the same time, 'negotiations' were undertaken with Indonesian leaders for the return of vehicles and personnel captured in the fighting. The Indonesian leaders partly complied. Mallaby's body was returned.[96] The War Diaries of 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry record that, on 3 November, a number of British officers and other ranks and 87 Indian other ranks who had been captured during the fighting arrived at Battalion Headquarters: 'had all been badly treated by Indonesians'. They were sent on to Brigade Headquarters.[97] The War Diaries of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade record the return of Major Dube from Indonesian captivity. Dube was an Indian. He commanded 'D' Company of 5/6th Rajputana Rifles.[98] He was visited by Macdonald on 6 November. He described to him the 'massacre' of his company after he had surrendered.[99] Such incidents as these, with captured personnel returning with tales of horror, can have done little to mollify the British attitude towards Indonesians in Surabaya. The terrible nature of what had happened to 49th Indian Infantry Brigade communicated itself to the officers and men of 5th Indian Division as they landed. Captain Wright, the Brigade Transport Officer of 9th Indian Infantry Brigade, recalls how he and others in the Division heard stories about the earlier fighting: 'We heard stories about the Mahrattas and Rajputana Rifles being butchered. Indonesians quite literally butchered people: they hacked them limb from limb. This was awful. The troops got quite worked up about it.'[100]

The failure of negotiations at the local level

Mansergh met Soerio on 7 November and drew his attention to the continuing disorder in the city. He demanded that captured personnel and vehicles be handed over and that Indonesian tanks and infantry leave the airfield, which had been allotted to the British. He then left it with Pugh to arrange with Soerio the fulfilment of Indonesian undertakings. Pugh easily obtained agreement to the British proposals, but it soon became clear to him, according to Woodburn Kirby, that Indonesian leaders were 'incapable' of implementing their undertakings, that is, of doing what the British told them. Mansergh wrote to Soerio and warned him that, unless 'looters and rioters' were disarmed, he would take over Surabaya. He suggested that they meet at his Headquarters on 9 November. Soerio refused, demanded to be treated with greater respect and denied that there was a law and order problem. He advised Mansergh not to carry out his threat to take over Surabaya.[101] This advice would have fallen on deaf ears. The War Diaries of 2/1st Punjab, one of the battalions in 123rd Indian Infantry Brigade, reveal that by this time military action had been resolved on and a date fixed. They record that, on 8 November, the Commander of the battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Sarbjit Singh Kalha, along with a certain 'Captain Arthur', went to a conference at Brigade Headquarters at 6.30 pm that evening 'to discuss the forthcoming ops against the Indonesians on the 10th of Nov'. The following day, another meeting is recorded: Lieutenant-Colonel Singh Kalha, Major Ware and Captain Arthur went to a conference at Brigade Headquarters at 9.00 am 'at which more points about the op were given'.[102]

5th Indian Division occupies Surabaya

Nevertheless, the formalities of negotiation were gone through. On the morning of 9 November, a letter was written to Soerio and leaflets were dropped by aircraft demanding that captured personnel be returned and that all Indonesians except for the Police and troops of the TKR surrender their arms. Indonesians were given until 6.00 pm that evening to comply with these requests. If they failed to comply, the leaflets said, the city would be searched and unauthorized persons found bearing arms would be shot.[103]

The Indonesians did not respond to these requests. On the morning of 10 November, the British were given their opportunity to move into Surabaya.[104] 49th Indian Infantry Brigade had by this stage concentrated itself in the dock area in the north of the city, where it had been reinforced by 5th Indian Division. No formations remained in the south of the city. To have left troops in the south at a time when the city was being progressively occupied from the north would have been an act of folly.

The British occupation of Surabaya, which took place between 10 and 29 November 1945, is widely seen as an act of brutal repression and retaliation in modern Indonesia. A painting in the military museum in Malang depicts British

aircraft strafing a battered street watched by exhausted but resolute freedom fighters. Many monuments in Surabaya celebrate the sacrifices made by Indonesian fighters and, every year, 10 November, the day on which the British launched their re-occupation of Surabaya, is celebrated as 'Heroes Day'. This general Indonesian perception of the Battle of Surabaya has communicated itself to a recent British examination of the death of Brigadier Mallaby, John Springhall's article in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* for 1996, '"Disaster in Surabaya": The Death of Brigadier Mallaby during the British Occupation of Java, 1945–46'. He says that 'massive military force' was used 'to subjugate Surabaya', that the action was 'a bloody punitive sweep' which 'totally devastated Java's second city'.[105] Such an interpretation requires qualification. Only two of 5th Indian Division's three Indian Infantry Brigades were landed at the beginning of the operation, so the number of troops in Surabaya increased threefold and not fourfold. In any case, it was clear that more troops were needed as 49th Indian Infantry Brigade had been out of its depth during the early period of fighting. It is true that warships were used to bombard the city, but they did not possess particularly heavy guns.[106]

The picture that emerges from British sources of the British occupation of Surabaya between 10 and 29 November 1945 is of a protracted operation, undertaken in carefully worked out phases in which Indonesians were by no means the only ones to suffer casualties. It is an episode clearly recollected by survivors. Captain Wright of 9th Indian Infantry Brigade recalls being given two benzedrine tablets by a fellow officer before the occupation began. He said to him: 'We're starting tomorrow and we're going up this side of the Kali Mas and 123rd Brigade are going up the other side and it may be that we have to be awake for 24 hours at least. Take these pills.' Wright decided to ignore this advice 'because the story was that once it wore off you went to sleep totally'. He still has the tablets at home.[107] To Major Henstock, the company commander in 5/6th Rajputana Rifles, it did seem that there was an aspect of revenge to the occupation of the city: 'It was as though we were to go in to get our pound of flesh.' Concerning the men under his command, he adds: 'The Hindu men had no qualms about killing Indonesians, who were Muslims, and were getting their revenge for our troops who had been massacred.' The advance was initially slow, as this officer recalls: 'Generally advance was slow as we had to clear buildings before proceeding. However, the speed had to be increased so we advanced without clearing all buildings.'[108] Captain Wright remembers that commanders prohibited the damaging of Surabaya's Chinese Quarter as the Chinese were important allies and should not be antagonized.[109] A report on the reoccupation of the city compiled by David Wehl of the Public Relations Office of South East Asia Command states how the Chinese were quick to resume normal life in the city in the wake of the British advance, how they were friendly to the British and helped them to find hidden centres of resistance and concealed arms.[110] The British pushed everything before them by establishing a front line, but they suffered casualties along this line every night from Indonesian sniping and mortaring. This comes across clearly from the daily situation reports.[111]

The object of the operation was to rescue those prisoners of war and internees still in Indonesian hands. Many were rescued, though many were killed by their Indonesian captors before help could arrive. Others were shelled by the British by mistake.[112] On the first day of the operation, 3,500 internees were contacted in the area of the Hotel des Indes and were evacuated.[113] Many of these were probably Eurasians, Chinese or Indonesians known for their pro-Dutch sympathies. The British claimed to have evacuated over 6,000 internees before their re-occupation of Surabaya, which was only a little less than the total number of internees whom the British evacuated to Surabaya before the arrival of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade.[114] Therefore very few European internees can have remained by 10 November as these were generally given priority for evacuation.

During the course of the three-week operation, the British advance ground on. There was little the Indonesian forces could do to stop them. Bravery, at times fanatical, could not make up for lack of training. The 20,000 troops of the TKR at Surabaya had been given a rudimentary infantry training by the Japanese but had no battle experience and had not been trained in the use of artillery or any of the other modern weapons which they had subsequently acquired from the Japanese. This lack of training became apparent to Captain Wright of Headquarters 9th Indian Infantry Brigade in a memorable incident. He remembers settling down in a billet one night. A shell passed through and landed in a jeep. He found that no-one had been injured so he went back to bed. The next morning this shell was brought to him by his orderly with a pot of tea. It had not gone off. The Indonesians did not know how to set the fuses. In the opinion of Captain Wright, they had obtained shells of this type and the artillery that fired them from the Japanese, who in turn would have acquired them on the surrender of the heavy anti-aircraft regiment based in East Java at the time of the Allied surrender in 1942.[115]

There was to be one more casualty in the wake of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade's Surabaya ordeal. This concerned the closing chapter of the career, in Surabaya, of the Brigade's Acting Commander, Colonel Pugh. The Muslim troops in 49th Indian Infantry Brigade had been called upon by Indonesians by means of loud-hailers to unite under Islam and support the national revolution. Colonel Pugh had wanted General Hawthorn to visit the troops of the Brigade to reassure them but he had refused. A similar request by Mansergh had also been refused. Hawthorn had on both occasions apparently pleaded pressure of business. These requests would have been made after Hawthorn's brief visit to Surabaya in the company of Sukarno on 30 October to negotiate the truce. Pugh reported these refusals in the Secret Monthly Intelligence Report which was sent to GHQ India, copies of which were also sent to General Hawthorn, at Divisional Headquarters, and General Christison, at Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies. Before despatch, Pugh showed the report to Mansergh who said that the contents were moderate and that he had done the right thing.

Pugh left Surabaya and went to Batavia where he was due to take command of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade. He was there confronted by an angry Hawthorn. The

General attacked Pugh for 'uttering a monstrous document implying his responsibility for the near loss of a whole Brigade'.[116] John Springhall, in his article on the death of Brigadier Mallaby, suggests that the document to which Hawthorn was referring was the Monthly Security Intelligence Summary for the period ending 20 November 1945 in which Pugh referred to the leaflet drop's 'apparently arbitrary precipitation of hostilities'.[117] It is true that this Summary dwells at length on the significance of the leaflet drop in engendering the fighting, for which 23rd Indian Division Headquarters was responsible and it would be quite understandable for General Hawthorn to be angry at this. But it contains no mention either of Hawthorn's refusal to visit the troops in Surabaya or of pan-Islamic propaganda directed at Moslem troops. Were there two reports? Pugh, in his unpublished account, suggests that there were. He says of Hawthorn: 'Undoubtedly, he had been responsible for the near loss of a whole Brigade, but the document to which he referred bore no mention of this. Possibly his conscience was troubled.' The Monthly Security Intelligence Summary for the period ending 20 November 1945 is to be found in the War Diaries of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade for October 1945; the author has not been able to trace a Report dealing either with Hawthorn's refusal to visit the troops in Surabaya or with the issue of pan-Islamic propaganda.

Hawthorn told Pugh that he was not prepared to have him as one of his Brigade Commanders as they could no longer trust each other. He would be flown to Singapore that afternoon, he said, where he would report to General Headquarters South East Asia Command. The two men parted. They met again after lunch, as Hawthorn had requested. Hawthorn handed Pugh a report which he asked him to initial. The report contained allegations that Pugh had mishandled a disciplinary case in which a Commanding Officer had been concerned, that he was suffering from battle fatigue and that he should be employed on the staff before being reconsidered for further command. Pugh refused to initial it. He then went by aeroplane to Singapore, where he was interviewed by General Dempsey. Dempsey told him he found the situation odd and would make enquiries. Ten days later, the two had another meeting. At this meeting, Dempsey told Pugh that he believed his version of events and would destroy the reports relating to the episode. He told him that the episode would never be recorded. He then said: 'You have had a hard war and have been in India a long time. I am sending you home. You are not to stay in India.' Pugh pointed out that his wife and daughters were still in India. 'I appreciate this', said Dempsey. 'I will send a signal to India asking for a priority passage home by sea for them. Your case has been referred to Lord Mountbatten, the Supreme Commander, and he accepts my decision to send you home with nothing against you.'

Pugh's war had come to an inglorious close. He had acquitted himself with distinction in the fighting in Surabaya but had made the mistake of criticizing a superior officer. This rebounded on him and consequently lost him the chance to command a Brigade. He reflected ruefully: 'It was three years before command of an Infantry Brigade again came my way.'[118]

That there was considerable personal antipathy between General Hawthorn and Colonel Pugh is not in doubt. The unpublished account by Pugh is supported by Lieutenant-Colonel Doyle, the Commander of 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry, in a letter to the author. He recalls how Pugh 'crossed swords' with Colonel Mellsop, who was at that time an officer on the Staff of 23rd Indian Division Headquarters who had been sent to visit the Brigade to try and 'calm things down'. He then says: 'Pugh was … an able officer but he became too hostile and was moved away to another post.'[119] In fairness to General Hawthorn, the prospect of having him as one of his Brigade Commanders cannot have been attractive.

3

ANGLO–INDONESIAN RELATIONS IN THE AFTERMATH OF SURABAYA

The consolidation of British power in West Java

Springhall, in his article on the death of Mallaby and the Battle of Surabaya, has stated that these events 'encouraged SEAC to find ways of escape from the burdens of occupation by handing over their hard-won bridgeheads in Java to the Dutch'. By way of example, Springhall states that, on 14 March 1946, 'Mountbatten told the British Chiefs of Staff that the re-entry of Dutch troops into Java, begun on 9 March, would continue as fast as ships could carry them'.[1] It is true that the Surabaya fighting and the death of Mallaby had alerted the British to the dangers of their involvement in Java and the need, in consequence, to hand over to the Dutch as soon as possible. Nevertheless, their response, in the short term, was, of necessity, not consistent with that imperative. With Dutch forces from Europe of divisional strength which might take over the bridgeheads as yet nowhere to be seen, the British would have to act on their own initiative to achieve the objectives of the occupation.

As has been seen in Chapter 2, negotiations with local leaders in Surabaya had failed, fighting had erupted and the British had been compelled to occupy the city by force in order to secure their military position and safeguard the internees, many of whom were in Indonesian hands. The British had learnt a painful lesson about the nature of the Indonesian revolution, namely that there was a spontaneous, violent element to it that was beyond the control of nationalist leaders, both central and local. That this was the conclusion of Mountbatten is made clear by Donnison in *British Military Administration in the Far East*. Donnison paraphrases a report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff of 14 December 1945 in which Mountbatten set out the options open to him in dealing with Indonesian opposition. Either there could be 'a meeting between Dutch and Indonesians under a British chairman at which the Indonesians must be brought to undertake to cease attacks on prisoners of war, internees and troops' or force would be used 'within the key areas to round up the extremists, temporarily confiscate transport used by these, disarm the Indonesian police force and impose order'. Mountbatten's view was that the example of Surabaya had shown that Indonesian leaders, 'whatever their own wishes and views might be … were not able to assert their authority over the more

violent of their supporters'. The option of force was therefore the policy agreed upon between Mountbatten and the Combined Chiefs of Staff.[2] The lesson of Surabaya was to colour British action in West Java, where the British presence was greatest, in the months ahead. The mistake of Surabaya was not to be repeated: the British would never again allow themselves to be overwhelmed by the superior numbers of Indonesian fighters. In a series of operations in the cities of West Java, the British deployed force when they considered that the security of their position was in danger. Thereafter, they established checkpoints and perimeters to prevent infiltration by 'extremists' of the areas which had been 'cleared' to their satisfaction.

The first set-piece military operation in West Java was Operation 'Pounce' in Batavia. The intention of the operation was to make the city 'secure' for the British. Partly, this was because the city was the home to large numbers of British and Indian troops and an even larger number of Dutch internees who had been brought in from the camps, as well as friendly local inhabitants who were suspected by Indonesian nationalists of pro-Allied leanings and who had had to seek shelter in the British-protected area. It was unacceptable that all these groups should be exposed to danger on a daily basis. It was also felt that a 'secure' Batavia was essential if political talks between Dutch and Indonesians in the months ahead were to have any chance of success. A 1st Indian Infantry Brigade Operational Order issued prior to the operation sums up well the mood on the British side: 'It has … become necessary to take steps to improve the present conditions in the City so that, in a calmer atmosphere, the Dutch and Indonesians may come to some political agreement without which there can never be any real law and order in JAVA.'[3]

An unpublished report compiled by the British on the occupation of Indonesia reveals kidnapping and murder to have been 'endemic': during October, November and December 1945 there were 500 examples.[4] Robert Cribb, in his study of the Jakarta People's Militia during the Indonesian Revolution, paints a vivid picture of the city at this time which confirms the British assessment. He describes the way in which armed gangs set out to create an air of fear and intimidation. These gangs were often led by members of the pre-war Jakarta underworld. Cribb states that this was a time of 'robbery, looting, kidnapping and random street murders in which Europeans disappeared, even in the heart of the city, to be found days later floating in one of the canals'. More terrifying than the actual scale of murder, says Cribb, was 'the randomness and unpredictability of the killings, and the fact that most Europeans could not distinguish assassins from the general Indonesian population'. Those Indonesians who returned to their former European employers, now released from the camps, and Chinese who sold food to Indian Army troops were subjected to intimidation.[5] The Indonesian Republican police force in the city was proving to be of little help; on occasions, it even took an active part on the side of 'looters and terrorists'.[6] A plan was accordingly drawn up to deal with 'extremism' and restore law and order. This involved cordoning off roads leading out of the city, carrying out searches for weapons and arresting 'wanted' Indonesians, that is, those whom the British suspected of 'extremist' activity.

It is not clear who, on the British side, suggested the operation in Batavia. In his memoirs, General Christison claims that the idea was his and that he suggested it to Mountbatten by means of an emissary who went to Headquarters in Singapore. This is not impossible, but the meeting would have had to have taken place before 7 December 1945, when Lord Alanbrooke, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who features in Christison's account, left Headquarters. According to Christison, Lieutenant-Colonel Ridley, his emissary, found Mountbatten with Lord Alanbrooke. According to Christison, the reason for the visit was to obtain permission for the operation since 'political considerations' in Britain and India were such that permission had to be obtained from the British Government for any action which might incur casualties. Ridley was apparently asked by Alanbrooke what casualties might be expected. He replied that, if things went well, few, but that in one or two places resistance might be met. There could be as many as 30. Mountbatten and Alanbrooke approved the plan. According to Christison, Mountbatten asked that only Indian troops be used. He did not want the wives of British troops to be widowed so long after the war. Christison implies that Mountbatten thought that the deaths of Indian troops, who, unlike the British, were volunteers, would not be so damaging to morale. Angered by Mountbatten's remark, Ridley is reported to have said: 'Sir, do you really think it is different if Mrs Poop Singh is made a widow?' Alanbrooke's response is said simply to have been: 'Tell your Commander his plan is approved.'[7]

It is true that British casualties were a worry for Mountbatten. On 14 December 1945, he asked the Chiefs of Staff to come to a decision quickly about the possibility of a military operation in Batavia on the grounds that 'the first British Brigade is now entering JAVA which will cause the proportion of British casualties to increase considerably.' Nevertheless, it does not necessarily follow that he would have sought to use Indian instead of British troops for fear of incurring British casualties. In the event, 5th Parachute Brigade, a British formation, was used in Operation 'Pounce'. Further, it is unlikely that, if immediate approval was given to the plan by Alanbrooke, Mountbatten would have been seeking approval for the action on 14 December, a week after Alanbrooke's departure. Christison's account may have been an attempt to portray Mountbatten in a negative light. His tendency to stray into politics when giving press conferences had earned him a reprimand from Mountbatten. On 9 December, for example, he had spoken 'off the record' to members of the press in Batavia. The BBC had then broadcast 'an interpretation of his remarks which suggested that British operations in West Java had the long-term aim of restoring Dutch rule'. Sjahrir, the Prime Minister of the Indonesian Republic, had left Batavia for the interior of Java, dismayed on hearing the broadcast. This was a severe blow for the British since Sjahrir was a man of moderate views. It was deemed essential that he be kept in Batavia within the Allied orbit in order to play his part in bringing about the Dutch–Indonesian rapprochement that the British desired. Incensed at Sjahrir's departure, Mountbatten had categorically told Christison that he was not, 'at any time, to get involved in discussions concerning H.M.G. policy'.[8]

Christison was relieved of his command at the end of January 1946. He was put in charge of Northern Command in the United Kingdom. There is no question but that his removal was for political reasons. His bluntness and lack of political finesse, an example of which is given above, alienated both Dutch and Indonesians and exasperated Mountbatten. In the opinion of Peter Dennis, Christison had become a liability, though he himself takes a favourable view of him, stating that 'his no-nonsense approach undoubtedly injected a very necessary note of realism into the situation in Java'.[9] He also compares him favourably with his counterpart in Indochina, General Gracey:

> In Java Christison used all his military power in parallel with a continuing political initiative, originally set in motion by his own decision to open negotiations with the nationalists despite strenuous objections by the Dutch and disquiet on Mountbatten's part. Even during the worst fighting at Surabaya, Christison never shut off negotiations with the nationalists, and continued to urge the Dutch to adopt a more realistic and generous policy. Gracey, on the other hand, defined his own role extremely narrowly (measured against either of his directives), and took no political initiative of even the most basic kind – such as meeting the Viet Minh representatives on or shortly after his arrival – until ordered by Mountbatten to arrange talks between the French and Viet Minh. Even then, his own remarks to the Viet Minh delegates were always couched in stark military terms: either obey the terms of the proclamation, which entailed a surrender to the hated and despised French of all the gains they had made since the heady days of the August revolution, or 'face the consequences'.[10]

In the event, two substantial formations, 161st Indian Infantry Brigade and 5th Parachute Brigade, were brought into Batavia specially for Operation 'Pounce'. 161st Indian Infantry Brigade was part of 5th Indian Division but had remained in Johore in Malaya when the rest of the Division was fighting in Surabaya. It had then been briefly in Surabaya.[11] 5th Parachute Brigade had come from Malaya and was later to take over Semarang in Central Java from 49th Indian Infantry Brigade.[12] In the early hours of the morning of 27 December, troops of 161st Indian Infantry Brigade and 5th Parachute Brigade placed a cordon around the city. Thus began an operation which was to last for 10 days. Unarmed men and women were allowed to leave but people were only allowed to enter if they were bringing foodstuffs for the market. Cars were allowed neither to enter nor leave. Vehicles driven by non-Europeans were impounded. Trains running between Batavia and Surabaya were searched. 'Suspected terrorists and kidnappers' were arrested. The electricity and water supplies were brought under British control and kampongs within the city were searched by troops belonging to 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, already in Batavia, and 5th Parachute Brigade. Unauthorised arms were confiscated and young men were searched on the spot. Palisades and other obstacles were removed to ensure free movement of troops inside the

kampongs. Before these were searched, it was customary to surround them before dawn. A public address van would drive in and broadcast the news that the area was surrounded and that a search for arms was about to be made. In some cases, Indonesian police and interpreters accompanied the search force. The population was asked to remain calm. Troops then went in, mustered the male inhabitants and searched them.[13]

The British were concerned for the safety of their troops but at the same time did not want to cause Indonesian loss of life if this could be avoided. In an Operational Instruction given to 4/7th Rajputs prior to Operation 'Pounce', it was stated: 'Any armed Indonesians who attempt to run away or attack Coy's posts will be fired on. The policy, however, is to arrest rather than shoot.'[14] In all, hundreds of arrests were made, unauthorised arms were confiscated and vehicles were impounded. After the end of the operation, the cordon was maintained around the city so as to prevent infiltration by extremist elements. At the request of the British, Sjahrir, now back in Batavia, gave his support to the operation and asked the people of the city not to oppose it but to co-operate. The local Indonesian press was also said to have been supportive. Notices were posted by the British, explaining the purpose of the operation and requesting full co-operation.[15]

Sjahrir had facilitated the tasks of the British by ordering, as far back as 19 November, that all Indonesian armed forces, both the regular Indonesian Army and the many irregular units, leave the city. He had wanted to avoid street fighting. Not only would this prejudice the relations between the Republic and the Allies but it would also diminish his own authority. The regular Indonesian Army had obeyed this injunction but one important formation of irregulars, the LRJR, that is 'Lasykar Rakyat Jakarta Raya' or 'People's Militia of Greater Jakarta', had decided to stay. In the face of the pressure of the operation, however, even its units, with the exception of only one, now pulled out of the city and regrouped at Karawang, to the east of the city.[16]

The policing of Batavia was extensively reorganized in the aftermath of Operation 'Pounce'. The Indonesian Republican police force that had hitherto operated in the city was 'purged of undesirable characters' and a new force, comprising Dutch and Indonesians, was organized under a British Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Police. The city was divided into seven divisions and a British military police sergeant was placed in charge of each as a superintendent, helped by either a Dutch or an Indonesian assistant. On British insistence, Dutch technicians took up a role in the public utility services. This caused some Indonesians to leave their work, as did pressure from 'extremists', but about 80 per cent remained and others gradually returned.[17]

Operation 'Pounce' had achieved a large measure of success from the British point of view, but certain outlying areas, such as Tanah Tinggi and Sawah Besar, continued to cause concern. In late January 1946, therefore, there were further searches for arms and screening of suspects.[18] Two interrogation centres were set up, one at Tanah Tinggi Barracks and one at a RAPWI Camp.[19] Again, the policy was 'Arrest rather than kill'. Selected areas were blocked off so as to prevent

armed Indonesians from leaving and entering. Arrests were made and vehicles were stopped. On 22 January, 4/7th Rajputs carried out a house-to-house search and collected all males aged over 16 for screening. Such operations continued to be undertaken by this battalion in February. In an Operational Order, it was stated: 'Fwd Coys are responsible for collecting all males for screening and sending them back to Bn HQ under escort on reaching each bound. Bn HQ will then send them to interrogation centres.' Metal discs with numbers painted on them were issued to the troops. These were tied to anyone who had been arrested and reports were compiled about them by British company commanders.[20]

The British were also making their presence felt in Buitenzorg: they now had the strength to overcome any Indonesian opposition there. 36th Indian Infantry Brigade was sent up from Batavia. Its arrival in Buitenzorg in early December considerably strengthened the British garrison.[21] Brigadier Roberts, the Brigade Commander, determined that the large and elegant Palace, situated in the centre of the town and occupying the high ground, would be occupied and serve as Brigade Headquarters. It was then occupied by Barnas, the Indonesian Resident of Buitenzorg, answerable to the Indonesian Republic. It appears that, on 8 December, Roberts informed Barnas of the British intention and was advised to co-operate as the occupation was a 'military necessity'. Time was given to him to obtain permission to leave from the Central Indonesian Government but it soon became clear that he would not comply with the British request. 5/9th Jats along with a troop of armoured cars were then moved into position to occupy the Palace by force. The gates were forced open, upon which slight opposition was encountered. There were no British casualties. The Palace was then occupied. Demolition charges were found and made safe and a few prisoners, whose identity is not clear, were released from the cellars. The Indonesian flag was lowered and the Brigade flag hoisted in its place. Thereafter, Brigadier Roberts arrived and Brigade Headquarters was opened.[22]

On 12 December, Brigadier Mellsop took over command of the Brigade.[23] Mellsop brought what might be described as an uncompromising approach to Anglo-Indonesian relations. On 15 December he issued an Operational Instruction to Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson Haffenden, the Commander of 5/8th Punjab, to carry out aggressive patrolling, demolish roadblocks, search houses for arms and deal 'firmly and sternly' with 'any disorder or lawlessness'. He ordered the arrest of anyone occupying a building found to contain arms and the shooting of anyone, other than the police, manning a roadblock or carrying arms. Anyone evading arrest or who fired on British troops was also to be shot. Tongas, carts and hand carts were to be searched; occupants of cars found to contain arms were to be arrested for interrogation and the cars were to be impounded. Above all, Mellsop was concerned not to lose the initiative: 'You will impress on all ranks of your bn [battalion] the paramount importance of obtaining and retaining the initiative. At present tps in BUITENZORG are far too defence minded. This is understandable as up to now tps have been thin on the ground. It is NOT acceptable now.'[24]

Operations were carried out further afield. An arms factory was discovered which turned iron piping into primitive grenades. The waterworks which supplied Batavia was captured by British-Indian troops and a force was established to protect it. A tea factory was located in the hills in which Republican Indonesians were housing political suspects from among their own people. As was so often the case in a national revolution against colonial rule, those among the Indonesian population who were deemed to be supportive of the Dutch or the British or who had actively collaborated with them were targeted by nationalists and imprisoned. Fifty-nine 'emaciated people' were released but several died before they could be taken to hospital. At the end of December, one of the four RAPWI Camps in the area was closed down and the remaining three were reorganized. At the same time, four operations were undertaken in Brigade strength. There were searches for arms and suspected persons. These operations went on for a fortnight, during which time nearly 100 people who were being held in captivity by Indonesian extremists were released. Visits were made to all the Japanese camps in the surrounding area. The smaller camps were closed down and the personnel moved to central camps at Pondokgede and Kota Baroe. Large quantities of Japanese arms and ammunition were destroyed so that they might not fall into Indonesian hands.

In early February 1946, a force of Brigade strength was sent to investigate reports of an Indonesian 'concentration camp' in the Megamedoeng area to the south east of the town. Forty-eight 'naked and starving Indonesians' were discovered and were evacuated to Buitenzorg. Captain Burgess, the Intelligence Officer of 1/8th Gurkha Rifles, who was with this force, recalls that, for some, the rescue had come too late: people were dropping dead half an hour after the arrival of the force. Once they had been brought to Buitenzorg, the survivors were clothed, treated and fed in the Indonesian Red Cross Hospital. The camp guards – members of the official Republican Police – were released. Brigadier Mellsop is said to have rebuked local leaders over the 'concentration camp'.[25]

In December 1945, it was reported that 'murder, kidnapping and looting were rife' in Bandung. The city therefore received attention from the British over many months.[26] On 6 December, a battalion operation was carried out with Japanese tank support to recover 500 refugees from south of the railway. Heavy Indonesian opposition was encountered and an air strike was carried out against a fortified building. During the second half of December, operations were begun to clear the northern part of the city of roadblocks, snipers and defensive positions. These operations were completed against considerable Indonesian opposition and aircraft were used in support of ground troops. Use was also made of Japanese tanks.[27] Tony Carr, Intelligence Officer of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, recalls the valuable part these tanks played:

> Their special value was in winkling out opposition which often camouflaged itself in the deep, concrete monsoon ditches which ran along either side of most roads in Bandoeng.

> An LMG [light machine-gun] in a concrete trench with overhead cover, even once you have located it, is difficult to deal with. Whilst cowering from its fire under any available shelter it was always a great relief to see a Japanese tank squeak and rumble forwards. The [Japanese] tank commander would be in the turret exposed from the waist up but quite indifferent to the bullets now aimed at him, while he gave instructions to his [Japanese] gunner. Even so, these undoubtedly brave Indonesians would often live to fight another day by retreating down other concrete ditches leading away from the road.[28]

As soon as the north of the city had been 'made safe', vast numbers of Chinese flooded in to it from the south, creating acute food and accommodation problems. Indonesians forces – based in the south – decided that they would allow no more Chinese to go to the north of the city. A British force was sent into the heavily defended south sector of Bandung on 25 December to collect those Chinese who wished to move. The British soon discovered that the Indonesian defences were well organized: it took them 12 hours of intensive street fighting to advance 800 yards with Japanese tank support. Indonesian fighters attempted to use terrified Chinese as a lever to stop the operation but were unsuccessful: 5,000 Chinese were evacuated and a 'pemuda' headquarters containing 100 Indonesians was captured.[29]

In late February 1946, a band of armed Indonesians from unoccupied south Bandung attacked a British position across the railway, the boundary between the northern and southern parts of the city. They managed to establish themselves in the station yard. This marked the beginning of a determined effort on the part of Indonesians to infiltrate north Bandung. In response to the deteriorating situation, 23rd Indian Division Headquarters moved into Bandung from Batavia.[30] For some, the arrival of Divisional Headquarters was a disappointment, as Tony Carr recalls:

> The effect of their arrival was like the headmaster joining a midnight feast in the dormitory. Military police sprang up like weeds and severely handicapped our social life, most of which had been taking place after curfew. Pallid staff captains wrote rude letters over the General's name trying to get us to hand in our illegal acquisitions – exotic pistols, powerful binoculars and other trophies according to taste.[31]

From the perspective of the British forces, March saw a deterioration in events. On the 20th, Indonesian 'extremists' opened up 'continuous fire' along the whole of the railway line and subjected north Bandung to 'indiscriminate mortaring'. This caused casualties to civilians in the RAPWI Camps and British troops. A RAPWI convoy was ambushed on the road to Tjimahi four miles to the west of Bandung and the area had to be 'cleared' by British troops after heavy fighting. On the morning of the 21st, the British laid down a heavy concentration of artillery fire on Indonesian mortar positions and the Headquarters of the Indonesian TRI

on the racecourse. This managed to dampen down Indonesian activity. General Stopford, Christison's successor as Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies since January 1946, then decided that the whole of Bandung would be occupied so as to prevent 'further disorders'.[32] Sjahrir was informed of the impending operations by Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, then superintending Dutch-Indonesian negotiations in Batavia. Clark-Kerr warned him that all armed Indonesians should be clear of the city by midnight on 24–25 March and that tear gas might be used.

Three infantry brigades were in position. The plan was that 49th Indian Infantry Brigade would advance from the east and 36th Indian Infantry Brigade would advance from the west; meanwhile, 1st Indian Infantry Brigade would hold the north Bandung perimeter. Before the operation took place, leaflets were dropped on the city warning the population of the move and explaining that more than 100 British troops and Allied prisoners of war and internees had been killed and wounded during the past 14 days by armed Indonesians from south Bandung. The night before the operation was due to begin, fires were seen burning in the south of the city. The operation, known as 'Operation Sam', was then begun.[33] The south of the city was found to be deserted except for a large number of Chinese. 7,000 of these moved to the north of the city, this being the most that the British could feed. The rest were told by loud speakers to stay put. Many of the city's main buildings, such as the Post Office, the railway station and two cinemas, were discovered to have been either burned to the ground or blown up.[34] The weather was vile, with continuous rain. In the words of the War Diaries of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles: '36 and 49 Bde have not got an enviable job occupying gutted buildings in this weather.'[35] After the completion of the operation, British troops cleared a number of unexploded demolition charges. Thereafter, Bandung continued to be harassed by Indonesian forces. Detachments of British troops were shot at and Indonesian activity to the north and north east of the city again caused an influx of Chinese refugees from outlying areas. A large-scale attack was expected, to raise the morale of the Indonesian forces which had fallen to a low ebb after the success of the British operation. It did not materialize. In late April, a British report noted: 'We now hold a perimeter of from 5 to 10 miles around the town and the general sense of security has increased enormously.'[36]

As well as asserting their military power in the three main cities of West Java, Batavia, Buitenzorg and Bandung, the British expended considerable energy in keeping open the road between them. Indonesian forces made constant attempts to hinder the movement of British convoys along this road. In many places, the route ran through river gorges and defiles – ideal country for ambushes. The usual Indonesian practice was to set up a road block and cover it by small arms fire. The response of the British to this threat was to put in place a scheme which they had had to employ in the face of a similar threat on the North West Frontier, namely stationing troops at fixed points along the road so that they might move to the help of a convoy in the event of an attack. Convoys generally consisted of between 150 and 175 vehicles. Six miles long, they were escorted by an infantry battalion with

supporting arms. Light Japanese tanks were used as some of the bridges along the route were not strong enough to carry the heavier British tanks. Air support was also provided in the form of Thunderbolts operating in pairs.[37] Despite these measures, some of those unfortunate enough to have to travel along the convoy route could still feel a sense of abandonment. In February 1946, the young Dirk Bogarde travelled in a convoy up to Bandung as part of the advance party which was to prepare for the move of Divisional Headquarters. The convoy was ambushed twice:

> We eventually got everything sorted out and moved off again at camel's pace, alert, listening for any signs of another ambush; but there were none, and we reached the harbouring area just as night was falling without incidents.
>
> It had been, by and large, a quiet day: only two short 'wee attacks' as the MO had said earlier [the Medical Orderly was a Scotsman].
>
> 'I don't know where the bloody RAF got to,' said the BM [Brigade Major] of XX Brigade. '*Supposed* to patrol this road with a convoy on it … I suppose we weren't large enough for them. So damned choosy … *Never* there when you need them.'[38]

Despite difficulties these measures seemed for the most part to be working well during the first two months of 1946. There was an upsurge in Indonesian activity in March and the military presence along the road was accordingly strengthened. Three infantry brigades came to be stationed along the road, each brigade having responsibility for a particular sector. Convoys came under command of Sector Commanders when traveling through their areas of responsibility and the Brigade Tactical Headquarters with a close escort would travel with the convoy.[39]

In April, 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles were sent from Bandung to undertake road-protection duty. The battalion, one of three under the command of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, was given a 12-mile section of road. In the middle was the kampong of Tjirandjang. Battalion Headquarters and two infantry companies were positioned here with artillery while the other two companies protected bridges at either end of the sector. Bridges and major kampongs were all given codenames so that it would be possible to speak in clear over the air.[40] There were lighter moments: 'A twelve foot monitor lizard lived under one of these bridges eating left over food thrown down to him.' To Lieutenant Carr, the Intelligence officer of the battalion, life on the road was something of a contrast to the relative comfort of Bandung. In his opinion, it was 'rather like leaving a West-End hotel to go and live in a derelict croft'. Indonesians could work their fields by day but, when night came, they might easily collect their weapons and take the offensive against the British patrols. On one occasion, Carr recalls, he and his men woke up to find that they had been under attack without knowing it, albeit with a more primitive form of weaponry: 'The palm thatched roofs were bristling with poisoned blow pipe darts. Very rustic.'[41] The road was badly pitted and was therefore ideal for laying

mines. Travelling by night, trucks could only see the mines if they had their lights on, but this made them a sitting target for snipers. Despite the overall British effort to provide more troops for the convoy route, 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles felt that the situation was not really under control: 'It is not possible to send out a bn or a bde gp to deal with kampongs miles away which harbour the extremists as all available men have to be looking after the road; a job which when NOT boring is inclined to be unhealthy.'[42] A memorandum compiled by Brigadier Wingrove in early May 1946, entitled 'Incidents', reinforces the observation by 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles quoted above that this form of duty was boring. Brigadier Wingrove, the Commander of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, of which 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles formed part, wrote:

> I see innumerable cases of men wandering about the road alone and even lying asleep with their arms unguarded when they are on road protection duty. This shows a lamentable lack of knowledge on the part of the men, or gross negligence on the part of Commanders, in not issuing clear and definite orders to their men. In either case, the Commander is entirely responsible, and the results i.e. loss of arms, kidnapping and even murder are the result of culpable negligence of NCOs and officers.[43]

By early June, the strain imposed on 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles was evident: 'Continuous day and night work is beginning to tell on the men. Picqueting, day patrols, night patrols, the necessary fatigues, guards and manning of posts is stretching everybody's, especially the rifleman's, endurance very nearly to the limit.' Patrols had no idea when they would encounter opposition. On one occasion, felled trees were discovered, which had to be cleared before the convoy came through. The area was searched and nearby, deserted kampongs were burnt down.[44]

To sum up, the short-term consequences of the Battle of Surabaya were a strengthening of the British presence in West Java. In the cities of Batavia, Buitenzorg and Bandung, set-piece military operations were undertaken to secure the British military position and the convoy route running between these cities was reinforced and patrolled. Springhall has stated that Surabaya 'encouraged SEAC to find ways of escape from the burdens of occupation by handing over their hard-won bridgeheads in Java to the Dutch'. While it is true that the Surabaya fighting alerted the British to the dangers of their involvement in Java and the consequent need to pass their responsibilities over to the Dutch, this section of the chapter has demonstrated that, with no Dutch forces yet in sight, the British increasingly had to take the offensive on their own.

Casualties, reprisals and atrocities

The British in Indonesia were faced with a number of moral dilemmas. The war in Europe had ended in May 1945 and the war in Asia had ended in August. Yet months after the Japanese surrender, the British found themselves in Indonesia,

ostensibly to undertake a humanitarian mission of rescue and repatriation, engaged in an undeclared guerrilla war with the forces of the Indonesian nationalist movement. It was necessary for them to overcome armed Indonesian resistance if they were to go about the business of rescuing and accommodating the internees and concentrating and repatriating the Japanese. In this respect, the British in Indonesia were coming up against problems which face any army of occupation waging a guerrilla war. In order to prevent Indonesians from hindering the attainment of their objectives, aggressive measures were resorted to. Throughout the occupation, burning of villages, even towns, and executions of prisoners became a matter of routine.

The largest set-piece retaliation by British forces against irregular Indonesian forces occurred at Bekasi, to the east of Batavia. It provides a good example of the ease with which hatred and violence between British and Indonesians could escalate as a result of a single incident. On 23 November, a Dakota carrying 20 troops belonging to 2/19th Kumaon crashed near Bekasi. A reconnaissance aircraft reported that both crew and passengers were safe.[45] The following day, 24 November, an expedition was undertaken by troops of 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry, one of the battalions belonging to 49th Indian Infantry Brigade which had taken part in the initial fighting in Surabaya but was now based in West Java. 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies along with Tactical Headquarters and a troop of tanks managed to reach the site of the crash. They found the body of an Indian other rank in the canal. Its condition was described in the Battalion War Diary for that day along with conjecture about what might have happened to the other occupants of the plane: 'Body horribly mutilated, one hand was cut off. Numerous wounds on body. One head of IOR and one hand … five blood stained socks, eight burnt out rifle butt plates were picked up from same area. Possible other occupants of plane suffered same fate.' The Dakota was found to be 'completely smashed up and burnt out except part of fuselage'.

'B' and 'C' Companies began searching kampongs 1,000 yards north of the crash site. All houses and bashas were set on fire on direct orders from the Brigade Commander. Approximately 200 houses were burnt out. In one of the houses, an Indonesian was discovered hiding. He was found to possess some Indian Army uniform and a rifle with the woodwork burnt out. His fate is not recorded. 'B' Company was then attacked by a group of about 100 Indonesians armed with swords and rifles. The attack was beaten off with the aid of mortars. Twenty-five Indonesians were killed, 20 were wounded and 15 were taken prisoner. The company suffered only one Indian other rank slightly wounded. At the same time, troops of 'D' Company killed five Indonesians who were 'trying to escape'.[46]

Further searches were undertaken during the following days. On 29 November, a column of troops and tanks went out towards Bekasi. Kampongs were evacuated in the face of the British advance. When the column reached Bekasi, the Black Buffaloes, the group which had killed the crew and passengers of the Dakota, made a stand but were all killed.[47] Bekasi itself was virtually deserted. A Dutch boy, twenty Chinese and Indonesians and three Ambonese women were released

from the prison. One of the Ambonese women stated that the RAF crew and the Indian troops had all been killed two or three days previously.[48] The bodies were discovered by 'D' Company of 1/16th Punjab, buried by the river.[49] Christison ordered that Bekasi be burnt down.[50] A force which was sent back on 13 December encountered no opposition. The town was thoroughly searched and a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition found along with a pay book belonging to one of the members of 2/19th Kumaon who had been on the plane. 600 houses were then burnt down and the main buildings in the jail area booby-trapped. At the request of those Chinese who remained, the Chinese quarter was not damaged.[51] Christison was the subject of unfavourable press comment for ordering the burning of Bekasi but he felt that his action was justified in that it put a stop to the activities of the Black Buffaloes.[52] In the words of Peter Dennis, however, Mountbatten was 'dismayed' at Christison's action and later told the British Chiefs of Staff: 'although reprisals will no doubt take place as the immediate result of understandable human reactions to gross cases of brutality or murder they must not be taken in cold blood as a matter of principle.' Christison subsequently claimed to Mountbatten's political adviser, H. F. C. Walsh of the Foreign Office, that the burning of Bekasi had been an 'operational necessity'. Mountbatten noted in response that, if it were true, it was 'a thousand pities' that he could not have been told 'in the first instance'.[53]

Although the British occupation of Indonesia had assumed the character of a war, it is clear that captured Indonesians were not treated as prisoners of war, as the British had treated the Japanese in Burma. Indonesians captured in the act of offering armed resistance were shot as a matter of routine. This is memorably described by Lieutenant John Mohun-Carew, who served with 3/3rd Gurkha Rifles, in an article in the *The Kukri: the Journal of the Brigade of Gurkhas*. He describes an operation undertaken in Bandung in early December 1945 to rescue a group of internees who had become surrounded by Indonesian 'extremists'. Gurkha riflemen and Sherman tanks advancing up a street were held up for one-and-a-half hours by four Indonesians in their late teens. They had a Japanese light machine-gun, three rifles and a 'plentiful supply of hand grenades'. Mohun-Carew recalls the end of their resistance:

> It was not until a tank gunner lost his temper and blasted two of them to pieces with a seventy-five millimetre shell that the tempo of their resistance broke down. One of them broke from cover and was shot down by a bren gunner. The other suffered himself to be taken prisoner.
>
> I find it hard to forget this boy whom we captured. Aged possibly eighteen, he was silent, unrepentant and sullen … Until one remembered the two dead Gurkha riflemen and five wounded on their way rearward on stretchers, it seemed that a sound thrashing and a severe talking to were indicated. This youth was not particularly anti-Dutch, British or anything at all. He was simply an irresponsible boy who had got himself a rifle and had been told to kill the British and Dutch.

> In England one can find his counterpart in Borstal Institutions. Possibly this is where he should have gone. In point of fact he was taken round the corner by two riflemen who, more it seemed in sorrow than anger, shot him.[54]

This account is indicative of an attitude which did not recognize that an 18-year-old guerrilla fighter could act as a bona fide member of a resistance movement. It is doubtful that Mohun-Carew would have been similarly dismissive in the case of an 18-year-old soldier or resistance fighter summarily executed by the German Army in the European War.

Summary treatment was also meted out to Indonesians found in possession of more primitive weapons. The War Diaries of 4/7th Rajputs record an incident which occurred in Surabaya on 3 December 1945: 'Chinaman reported that a band of Indonesians was attacking Chinese quarter. 7 Pl C Coy went to investigate and Indonesians fled. 7 Indonesians of whom two were wounded were caught in house armed with spears and swords. No Cas own tps. [No casualties to our own troops.]' The entry for 4 December reads as follows: '7 Indonesians captured 3rd Dec shot.'[55] Other offences for which shooting was the prescribed punishment were failing to halt when challenged and manning a roadblock. Instructions of this nature are to be found in countless operational orders to units.[56]

Peter Dennis has surveyed the British occupations of Indochina and Indonesia from the angle of high politics in *Troubled Days of Peace: Mountbatten and South East Asia Command, 1945–6*. His findings with regard to the situation in Indochina may provide the key to understanding why summary justice was employed so routinely in Indonesia. He relates how an upsurge in violent anti-British activity by elements of the Viet Minh in October 1945 placed the former in something of a legal dilemma. General Gracey, the Divisional Commander, believed that those who killed British and Indian troops were committing murder. The logical solution, therefore, was to hand them over to the French courts. These, however, were already overloaded with cases, with the result that punishment would be slow and would therefore have little in the way of immediate, deterrent effect. Gracey suggested to his superior, General Slim, that this difficulty could be dealt with by implementing a system of summary justice, though the system he envisaged would involve trials being conducted by senior officers, something that is not evident in the case of Indonesia. The alternative propounded by Gracey was that culprits could be tried as war criminals. Slim criticized this latter course on two grounds: first, war crimes could only be committed by those engaged in the prosecution of a war, and the current situation was not war but 'civil disturbance'; second, for war crimes trials to be held, a British Military Administration would have to be proclaimed, which ran counter to the British Government's policy of limiting its involvement in the territories of other powers as far as possible.[57]

Indonesians could also lose their lives just for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. An officer serving in the Surabaya area in the early part of 1946 recalls going out on an operation with an Indian unit. This unit was to go to a

kampong, burn it down and then return. When the kampong was reached, it was found to be deserted except for one old man. The kampong was set on fire and the man was taken prisoner by the patrol, which set off back to its base. The patrol was moving slower and slower because the man could not keep up. It decided to stop. A shot rang out and the patrol then moved off at its usual pace.[58]

In the frequent armed engagements which took place between British and Indian troops and Indonesians, Indonesians fared far worse in terms of casualties because they were no match for their well-armed and highly trained opponents, even when they had the benefit of Japanese military equipment. In three days of operations outside Surabaya, for example, between 20 and 22 December 1945, 9th Indian Infantry Brigade inflicted casualties on their Indonesian adversaries of 105 dead and 70 wounded. The cost to the Brigade was one Indian other rank dead and nine wounded.[59] Similar statistics are furnished by the War Diaries of 1/3rd Madras, part of the Divisional Infantry of 5th Indian Division and also deployed in the Surabaya area. During December, the battalion suffered casualties of one Viceroy's-commissioned officer and three Indian other ranks wounded but killed 249 Indonesians.[60] By the end of the occupation, total British and Indian casualties were 2,353. Most of these had been sustained by the Army, with Indian other ranks suffering the greatest number of casualties. Of the total number of British and Indian casualties, 620 were killed or died of wounds, 1,331 were wounded and 402 were missing. Indonesian casualties were far greater: 13,441 had been killed and 17,808 had been wounded, giving a total of 31,249 casualties.[61]

Another controversial issue, particularly in the wake of recent revelations concerning the conduct of British and American personnel in Iraq, is that of prisoner abuse. Evidence that this was a feature, albeit on a small scale, of the British occupation of Sumatra, has been conveyed to the author by the science fiction writer Brian Aldiss and is also contained in the latter's novel about the occupation, *A Rude Awakening*, published in 1978. Aldiss served on Sumatra as a Sergeant with the Royal Corps of Signals. When interviewed by the author, he stated that he had no hard evidence concerning the torture and murder of Indonesians by British personnel, though he did remember that two men came to his mess in Medan, where he was stationed for most of the occupation, and boasted of such activities. One was a large, clumsy, brutal looking man; the other looked like a weasel. They seemed to be close friends. They came to the mess and boasted about having tortured Indonesians. Aldiss' fellow NCOs in the Royal Signals were, as he himself puts it, 'a civilised bunch', and were consequently horrified at what they heard. Aldiss has no recollection of the unit to which the men belonged. He believes that they were under the command of a notoriously brutal Dutchman, Raymond 'Turk' Westerling, to whom they had probably been seconded. They seemed to idolize him. Westerling was known to detain Indonesians in the basement of a large, painted office block. The methods of torture seemed 'unprofessional' to Aldiss. Golf clubs were used to hit people. Aldiss recalls being particularly disgusted at the treatment of an Indonesian woman who was reputedly beaten to death with golf clubs, about which the two NCOs had bragged.[62]

In Aldiss' novel, the details are slightly different. Only one torturer appears, 'Sergeant Jackie Tertis'. He is a member of PEA (Prevention of Enemy Activity) Force, 'a dodgy action column which worked in liaison with the piratical Dutchman, "Turk" Eastermann'. Tertis is well known to those around him, particularly 'Sergeant Horatio Stubbs', alias Brian Aldiss. He brags about his activities in the mess one evening:

> 'We've got a right bloke in clink today, a bugger called Luat, a captain in the TRI …'
>
> 'I don't want to know, Jackie.'
>
> Tertis cackled. 'Do you know what he was saying, in his bloody *krab* English? He was appealing to the Atlantic Charter that Churchill and Roosevelt invented back in '41 or some time. We told him that the Atlantic Charter had nothing to do with black bastards like him.'
>
> He pointed out some blood, drying on the leg of his uniform. 'I was practising my golf on him. Very good shots with a mashie-niblick.' More cackling. 'And there was a cow and another bloke – we half-drowned him in one of those Dutch bath-things. I mean, really … Wwrrrrr, he bobbed up with the water all streaming off him all purple in the face, then *down*, you bastard, *down*, drown, drown!'
>
> He went through the motions as he spoke, laughing and half-choking …
>
> 'It's torture. It should be bloody fucking stopped.'
>
> He gave me a sneering look. 'Well, just you fucking try to stop it, mate. They deserve it – I'll give them fucking Merdeka … You'd lick the arses of these fucking murdering blacks. You're too bloody squeamish to live, you are, Stubbs…'
>
> 'I can remember when you had the decency to be squeamish too, Tertis.'
>
> 'Piss-off! Since then, I've fucking come of age. No soap behind my arse, mate. You'll never know. I swung that fucking golf club to good effect this afternoon, must have broken every stinking rib in that cunt Luat's black body, plus a few kicks in the goolies for luck. Teach these bastards to shoot us up. Wwrrrrr …' The noise he made was a compound of derision and vomit, as if he could not bear his own secret feelings.[63]

Aldiss later sets out the reactions of Sergeant Horatio Stubbs to the practise of torture as well as the reactions of others:

> From my billet, I could see Tertis's torture house in the distance, or part of it, at least, glimpsed between other houses. Indonesians were beaten up there regularly. No one said anything. A perverted part of me always wanted to watch. It wasn't every day you got the chance to see some poor naked sod bashed to death with golf clubs.

> In his cups, Jackie Tertis loved to talk about it. Many of the sergeants claimed he was making it all up. That was their defence.

Tertis returned to the subject during supper in the sergeants' mess:

> He had a long story about a young Malayan girl and two men who had been caught in an ambush the previous evening, one of them the Luat he had mentioned to me earlier. He was very excited and drinking heavily …
>
> 'We questioned the girl all morning,' he said. 'She was guilty all right – confused in her answers. We stripped her off and tied her to the table with her legs open. Wwrrrrr … Fought like a tiger, she did. We tore every strip of clothes off her and then raped her, all four of us, and then we mashed her tits and head in with golf clubs. Wwrrrrr …'[64]

Tertis's companions voice disgust at his story. It is suggested that he should be reported to the Divisional Commander:

> 'You chicken bastards, look at your fucking faces! "Report me to the GOC," he said. 'You think the old general doesn't know about PEA Force, doesn't know, doesn't laugh? He'd have liked to stuff her himself. Wrrrrr …'[65]

The British were also determined to suppress outward manifestations of Indonesian nationalism which did not take the form of armed resistance. Indonesian slogans written on walls in cities such as Batavia and Surabaya proclaiming Indonesia's right to be free and denouncing both the Dutch and Europeans in general were rubbed out, once control of the cities had been established. Often the task was carried out by the Japanese under supervision.[66] It was perhaps ironic that the Japanese should be obliged to erase the outward manifestations of a sentiment which they had done so much to encourage, through anti-European propaganda and paramilitary training throughout the occupation and ultimately through involvement with the declaration of Indonesian independence. Such erasure by the British of manifestations of Indonesian nationalism gives the lie to Mountbatten's claim in Section E of his Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff that the British 'would not interfere in the internal affairs of another country'.[67] In effacing slogans which offended the Dutch, they were giving the impression that they sided with the latter against the Indonesian freedom movement.

Indonesian independence had been proclaimed by Sukarno and Hatta on 17 August 1945, when the British occupation force was still nowhere to be seen. Many Indonesians believed their country was free. The British presence was very much a reality a year later. In modern day Indonesia, Independence Day is a public holiday. Parades are held in every town and village throughout the country, the biggest being in Jakarta, where carnivals and cultural shows are held all over the

city. In 1946, the British determined that there would be no demonstrations of any sort. It was natural that they should have been on their guard against an outbreak of violence, but there is a strong sense that their stance was politically motivated, that commanders had a deep fear of demonstrations of nationalist feeling. It is possible that they were fearful that this nationalist feeling would communicate itself to the Indian troops under their command. In all the areas of Java which the British occupied, troops were held in a state of readiness. In Batavia, where the biggest demonstrations might reasonably be expected, an Operational Order issued by 37th Indian Infantry Brigade stated:

> 17 August 46 is INDONESIAN 'Independence' Day. Permission has been sought by the INDONESIAN 'Republic' to hold demonstrations/ processions etc within the BATAVIA protected area. Permission has been refused. It is possible that attempts to form processions/ demonstrations may be made … The responsibility for preventing the fmn of processions/demonstrations is primarily that of the Civ and Mil Police. 37 Ind Inf Bde will be called upon to assist the Police only should the necessity arise. 37 Ind Inf Bde will prevent the fmn of processions/demonstrations in the BATAVIA protected area. Two mob colns will be prepared to move to any part of the BATAVIA protected area on orders 37 Ind Inf Bde. Res will be maintained by all inf bns in the BATAVIA protected area for action within their own areas … All tps will be warned that the min of force necessary will be used. Tear gas will NOT be used without sanction of this HQ. Tear smoke grens will however be used in an emergency.[68]

In the event, the first anniversary of Indonesian Independence passed off peacefully.[69]

No treatment of Anglo-Indonesian relations would be complete without an examination of the use which the British made of Japanese troops. In Chapter 1 it has been seen how the British relied on Japanese military co-operation during their deployment in West and Central Java. Mention has also been made in this Chapter of Japanese military assistance in clearing operations in north Bandung in December 1945. Faced with the common danger from Indonesian 'extremists', it is evident that in many cases British and Japanese drew close together and forgot their previous enmity. Major Hickey, a company commander in 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, has recalled that, being confronted with the need to work with the Japanese in the Indies, he decided to set aside any feeling of animosity towards his former enemies: 'I was wounded twice by the Japs and I shot three of them and I reckoned I was more or less quits.' He recalls that the Gurkha riflemen of his battalion who had joined up since the Burma campaign were 'already impressed by the apparent efficiency and discipline of our new allies'.[70]

British reliance on the Japanese was necessitated by their own military weakness. By November 1945, with fighting going on all over Java, the British were stretched

to the limit. Christison appealed to Mountbatten for reinforcements but was told that none were available. Mountbatten said: 'Re-arm the Japs and take them under command.' Major Hickey has observed: 'It was an Alice in Wonderland situation. Bandoeng garrison was increased within a week by 1500 armed Japanese, much to the relief of Brigadier Mac [Brigadier Macdonald, the Commander of 37th Indian Infantry Brigade], already short of one battalion (3/10th [Gurkha Rifles]).' Hickey was put in command of a detachment of 100 Japanese and was told to weld this force 'into a battle group in the face of the increasing threat'. Hickey exercised control of his new force by means of an interpreter, a certain Captain Hiro Namazura, 'a diminutive artillery officer with glasses'. Hickey was impressed with him: 'His looks belied him: when he cracked the whip, his troops jumped to it. His English was rudimentary, although his comprehension was good and he enforced my instructions to the letter.' On one occasion, Hickey and his mixed force had to go to the rescue of a group of Dutch internees who had refused to leave their homes for the security of the British-controlled internee camps and had become surrounded by Indonesian 'extremists' intent on killing them. The rescue operation involved the Japanese using artillery against the Indonesians who were surrounding the internees. Hickey recalls:

> At H minus 5, Capt Namazura, who was also the FOO [Forward Observation Officer], with his radio headset clamped firmly over his cloth cap, spluttering with excitement and forgetting that this British officer did not understand Japanese, exclaimed: 'Anone, Arimaska! The Cannon has fired'. As the shells whined over our heads and crashed down accurately on the selected targets, the injunction not to fraternise with the Japs was momentarily forgotten.

Ninety-five internees were rescued, the remainder being killed in the cross-fire. Hickey's Gurkha riflemen suffered casualties of two killed and seven wounded; his Japanese troops suffered two killed and five wounded.[71]

Captain Eadie, an officer in the same unit, recalls a similar incident in Bandung in the early part of 1946. He says that the battalion had a Japanese field artillery battery under command. This was probably the same as that mentioned by Hickey. On one occasion a group of Indonesian 'extremists' were 'holed up' in the Hotel Isola in Bandung. This hotel had a prominent entrance. 'The Japanese officer commanding the battery asked the British commander where he wanted the first shell to be fired and was told to fire it through the front door, which he accordingly did. This was considered to be a feat of accuracy.'[72] Major Henstock, a company commander in 5/6th Rajputana Rifles, recalls co-operating with the Japanese in an operation in Semarang in Central Java. The area to be cleared was near the port and a Japanese company was assigned to his force. He and his troops took one side of the road and the Japanese took the other. The area in which the operation was being carried out was 'fairly open country' with only a few kampongs: 'There was no talking. I just showed the map to the Jap officer and indicated the area to

clear, indicating his side of the road and mine and gave the signal to advance. No opposition was encountered and I admired the Jap field craft.'[73]

Not all British personnel were so full of admiration for the Japanese. Mention has been made above of the use of Japanese troops in Semarang. This was necessary because the British did not have enough troops to man the defensive perimeter around the town. In early March 1946, two deserted kampongs 1,500 yards in front of the perimeter were occupied by hostile Indonesians. According to Mountbatten, in a report which he sent to the War Office, these Indonesians 'instantly attacking our positions succeeded in infiltrating into the Perimeter and started to Mortar the town'. Japanese troops were sent into action: 'Two platoons of Japanese Troops then patrolled to the Kampong entirely as a defensive measure. The Terrorists offered considerable resistance and suffered casualties of 17 killed of whom 8 were bayoneted in their positions.' Mountbatten emphasized that those killed were armed Indonesians and not ordinary villagers: 'The Terrorists were not by any possible stretch of imagination villagers but Troops in uniform armed with modern weapons and fighting.'[74]

Mountbatten's report was in direct response to an account of these events that the *Daily Worker* had published under the heading 'Japs Kill Javanese but British Troops Told: "Keep Silent"'. The article asserted that those killed by the Japanese had been 'villagers'. It said that British troops belonging to 5th Parachute Brigade, protesting about the use of Japanese troops to attack two kampongs, had been told by their Commanding Officer, 'that they must not comment on the use of Japanese troops against the Indonesians'. Six members of the brigade had then apparently written to the editor of the brigade newspaper protesting against the use of Japanese troops. The letters were shown to the Brigadier. He immediately called a 'special parade' and ordered that those who had written the letters be present. He said that 'the action of writing the letters was a breach of military discipline and would not be tolerated'. He also apparently said that 'no discussion of the political aspect of the brigade's mission in the Netherlands East Indies would be permitted'.[75] Tom Driberg, the back bench Labour MP, picked up on this story in a question which he put to Jack Bellinger, the Under-Secretary-of-State for War, in the House of Commons on 2 April 1946. Driberg asked why the men of 5th Parachute Brigade had been instructed that no discussion of the political aspect of their mission in Indonesia was allowed, that the writing of letters to the brigade newspaper expressing 'concern at the abandonment of British neutrality in the Dutch–Indonesian dispute' was a 'breach of discipline' and that the British purpose in Indonesia was 'to reinstate the sovereign Dutch power'. Driberg also asked Bellinger if he would instruct 'those concerned that the primary purposes of British intervention in Indonesia were the recovery of prisoners, and the disarming of the Japanese and that impartiality as between Dutch and Indonesian claims should be maintained'. Bellinger replied by saying that he was 'making enquiries' and that as soon as they were completed he would write to Driberg.[76] His enquiries resulted in the production of Mountbatten's report, giving the 'official' version of the incident involving Japanese troops.

As well as being used offensively, Japanese troops were also used on guard duties. There is evidence that even this revolted some on the British side. In January 1946, a group of British non-commissioned officers in Batavia asked one of their number, Staff Sergeant Barker, to write a letter to Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, setting forth their grievances:

> Two Jap sentries stand at this billet door, as I write, armed with loaded British rifles, and a Bren Machine Gun with 13 full magazines. We sleep securely, thinking 'Hell, have we descended to THIS? Our tortured P.O.W. comrades must be writhing in their jungle graves; what did they die for?' We use our vile enemies as *co-belligerents* against these natives, yet have the effrontery to accuse their President Dr Soekarno as a 'Collaborator' during his defenceless peoples' war-suffering![77]

Anglo–Indonesian co-operation

So far, this chapter has dealt almost entirely with the negative aspects of Anglo-Indonesian relations in the aftermath of Surabaya, namely the assertion of military control in the main cities of West Java and the convoy route between them, the repressive policies of burning villages, shooting prisoners and suppressing many of the outward manifestations of Indonesian nationalism as well as the deployment of the Japanese in an offensive role and for guard duties. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the British policy was not exclusively one of out and out repression during this time. It was necessary for them to deal with resistance where this occurred, but this was almost always offered by irregular groups and not the official forces of the Indonesian Republic. The British acknowledged Republican authority both in the areas under Allied occupation and in the vast tracts of territory beyond the perimeters. This was because they wished to enlist Republican help in accomplishing their humanitarian and administrative tasks, such as maintaining law and order and setting up utilities in the key areas and rounding up the Japanese and the Allied prisoners of war and internees. They therefore sought, where possible, to achieve good relations with Republican leaders. This policy was resented by the Dutch and gave rise to a considerable amount of ill feeling but it was the only course open to the British if they wished to accomplish their tasks and, in any case, there was nothing that the Dutch could do about it while the British remained in control.

The biggest administrative problem for the British was the gathering in of Allied prisoners of war and internees and Japanese Surrendered Personnel. In this, they came to rely heavily on the Indonesian Republican authorities. The magnitude of their task was augmented by the fact that, during the last month of 1945, tens of thousands of Eurasians and members of other minority groups had been interned by the Indonesian authorities alongside the original prisoners of war and internees interned by the Japanese as a result of the disturbed conditions which obtained with the declaration of independence and fighting with the British.[78] In January

1946, the British entered into negotiations with the Indonesian Republican Government to arrange for the evacuation of all these people. The first meeting was held in January 1946. The Indonesian Representatives agreed to start evacuating within 10 days. Robert Cribb, in his study of the Jakarta People's Militia, has emphasized the significance of this agreement for the Republic: 'It was an important agreement, amounting to de facto recognition of the TKR by the British, and demonstrating to the world that the Republic had a humanitarian concern for the victims of Japanese internment.'

But after they had allowed a single trainload to move from Central Java to Batavia, the evacuation was stopped. The British concluded that the Indonesians were treating the internees as potential hostages, that they were using their power over them to extract political concessions from them and the Dutch. It was true that political pressures in Central Java were partly responsible for the cessation of the evacuation. What has also to be considered is that the Indonesian Republic could not, as Cribb has pointed out, guarantee the safety of the internees at the hands of a powerful armed group, the 'Lasykar Rakyat Jakarta Raya', or 'People's Militia of Greater Jakarta' who predominated in the Karawang area to the east of Batavia through which the trains had to pass.[79] The British resumed negotiations with the Indonesian Republican authorities at Yogyakarta on 5 April. It was agreed that evacuation should be by air from Soerakarta. The Indonesian authorities, understandably, stressed that neither Dutch aircraft nor personnel should be employed. The airlift began on 20 May and continued until 23 July. 19,000 internees were lifted to Semarang and Batavia by RAF Dakota aircraft. British ships ferried internees from Semarang to Batavia where they were accommodated in transit camps. On 23 July, the operation was suspended by the Indonesian authorities, probably because of an incident between Java and Bali in which the Dutch Navy was thought to have acted offensively. The deadlock over the evacuation continued until the end of August when Lord Killearn visited Java. His main mission was to bring Dutch and Indonesians together to settle political problems in the Indies but there were a number of other issues which were within his remit. Killearn discussed with the Indonesian authorities the possibility of resuming the evacuation from the interior of Allied prisoners of war and internees and friendly local people who had subsequently been interned. The Indonesian authorities showed a willingness to co-operate and, at a meeting on 3 September at Cheribon, it was agreed to start evacuation by rail to Batavia on 27 September at a rate of 1,000 internees each week. The British stressed their own responsibility towards the original, European internees and it was agreed that these people should have priority for evacuation. Of these, 3,384 had been brought back to Batavia by the end of November. The British had therefore discharged their responsibility to those internees who had been in the camps at the time of the Japanese surrender. They had also brought out over 20,000 friendly local inhabitants from Republican-controlled territory since May. Nevertheless, many such people remained after the departure of the British in late November. British and Dutch thought that 25,000 remained behind. The

Indonesian authorities considered that this figure was high but at the same time admitted that their own figure of 9,000 was 'by no means complete'.[80]

In the case of the concentration of the Japanese in centres prior to repatriation, much was achieved through Anglo-Indonesian co-operation. This was part of the overall British plan for the repatriation of all Japanese, Koreans and Formosans, with the exception of war criminals, by 1 October 1946. Codenamed Operation 'Nipoff', it came into effect in April. In the case of Java, the plan was to concentrate all Japanese, Korean and Formosan personnel on Gallang Island from the ports of Batavia, Surabaya and Semarang, as well as Tjilatjap on the south coast using Japanese coastal craft controlled by the Naval Officer in Chief, Batavia. Screening was carried out at Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya but it was not supposed to delay the repatriation programme. At the same time, an agreement was reached with the Indonesian Government and the Indonesian TRI for the withdrawal of the 30,000 Japanese Surrendered Personnel who were still in the interior of Java. The Indonesian authorities undertook to provide sufficient Japanese to fill the shipping provided at the ports of Tegal, Probolinggo and Cheribon. Indonesian co-operation in this respect was all the more remarkable in view of the use which the British had made of the Japanese, noted earlier in the chapter, in an offensive capacity. In return, the British promised the Indonesian authorities that they would provide them with coal, locomotives, trucks, spares, petrol and oil and a certain amount of arms. The result of this co-operation was that, by July, the withdrawal of Japanese personnel from Java was virtually complete. In all, 60,000 Japanese had left the island. POPDA was the Indonesian evacuation organisation responsible for this. POPDA stood for 'Panita Oentoek Pengambalian Bangsa Jepang dan Asing', or 'Committee for the return of Japanese Military Personnel and other foreigners'. It had evacuated 30,000. 11,000 Japanese were left in Java to be used as 'labour'. These were handed over to the Dutch on the departure of the British.[81]

British commanders on the ground in the Allied-occupied enclaves often sought to work with local Indonesian Republican leaders if they thought that practical results could be achieved. The following incident is an example of Anglo-Indonesian co-operation in the field of civil affairs and the rehabilitation of municipal services at the local level. In Buitenzorg, local Indonesian leaders gradually came to co-operate with the British, but this took time: the aggressive British tactic of forcing open the gates of the Governor-General's Palace and setting up their Headquarters caused unrest and severely antagonized Barnas, the Indonesian Resident. His response was to cut himself off from the British. Ironically, he was then captured by 'extremists' but freed as a result of the efforts of the Indonesian TKR (the Tentara Keamanan Rakyat, or People's Security Army) and Police, both of these being official arms of the Indonesian Republic. On 30 December, he telephoned to arrange a meeting with Brigadier Mellsop for the following day. This was agreed to. The next day, perhaps as a result of the equivocal position in which he found himself, he cancelled, saying that another Republican Minister, whose attendance had not previously been mentioned, could not be there. Later that day, Idham, another Indonesian leader, telephoned Brigade Headquarters.

He conveyed his greetings for a Happy New Year to the Brigade Commander and all officers and expressed his regrets for Barnas's failure to keep his appointment. He said that he would strive to bring about better relations.[82]

On 3 January, the Brigade Major and Captain Stobie of the Brigade Staff met Barnas. Other leaders present were Colonel Abdul Kadir, the Head of the TKR in West Java, Colonel Hussain, the Head of the TKR in Buitenzorg, Gaus, representing the Indonesian Central Government, Idham, responsible for liaison with the Allied forces, and Enoh, the Chief of Police. Barnas said that the TKR and the Police had to be strengthened. Abdul Kadir agreed to get rid of 'undesirable' elements in the TKR and build up the force with the help of the Indonesian Central Government. Enoh, the Chief of Police, said that experienced members of the Police would not carry on owing to the military situation and the British occupation of the Palace and said that he was forced to use untried police straight from Police School. The Conference continued the next day, and the day after that, when it was agreed that the TKR and the Police would work together and get back experienced officers. Barnas requested that the Police take over the Police Station so that people could see that they were functioning properly and thus their confidence would be restored. As if to assure the British of his good intentions, Abdul Kadir stated that he had arrested 77 'terrorists'. On 7 January, Abdul Kadir visited Brigadier Mellsop and suggested immediate steps by which his men might take over the town and its headworks. He asked for his men to be armed with British weapons as this would have a 'great propaganda value' for local people. Brigadier Mellsop did not agree to this but suggested that Abdul Kadir could try taking over the western part of the town.

On 14 January, another conference was held. British representatives were Brigadier Mellsop, Major J. D. King Martin – the Brigade Major – Captain I. A. Causey, the Brigade Intelligence Officer, and Captain J. Stobie, who was in charge of 'political intelligence'. Indonesians present included Gaus, the representative of the Indonesian Central Government, Barnas, Major-General Didi – the new Commander of the TKR in West Java – and Colonel Abdul Kadir. Mellsop explained the reasons for British troops being in Java, stressed that politics did not enter into their activities and said that he would not discuss political matters. He said that he was concerned only with the maintenance of law and order so that he could carry out his tasks of disarming the Japanese and protecting Allied prisoners of war and internees. The discussion was, in the opinion of the British, 'frank and cordial' and a number of points were agreed. The first was that 'law and order' had to be maintained, that the Chinese and Arab communities should move about safely and that normal daily life be resumed. Secondly, it was agreed that the Indonesian police should be 'properly organized, uniformed and provided with identity cards' and should resume 'normal police duties in the town'. This force was to include an Arab and a Chinese element. The principle of combined patrols by British forces and Indonesian police for 'specific supervisory duties' was accepted. Thirdly, it was agreed that the TKR would for the time being confine itself to 'organization and training' and that its employment in support of the police and for the control

of the entry of 'extremists' and 'bad characters' into the town would be discussed at a later date. Fourthly, the Indonesian representatives agreed to make efforts to reopen shops and markets and to resume 'public utility services'. Finally, Mellsop stated that Indonesians could be assured that the British military authorities would not interfere with the free movement of Indonesians going about their legitimate business. This referred particularly, he said, to Indonesian officials and their subordinates in the administrative services. Once these points had been made, the Indonesian leaders pointed out that, initially, there had been friendly and close co-operation between the British and Indonesians in Buitenzorg but that the activities of 'extremists' had necessitated military action by the British from which time co-operation had ceased. Now that conditions were returning to normal, they said, they wished co-operation to resume and they offered to do their best to assist. The concluding assessment in the British minutes of the meeting was optimistic: 'This desire to co-operate is based on a true appreciation of our mutual aims and the final details of special matters will be worked out between responsible reps of both sides.'[83] This statement emphasized that the British did not want to undermine the Indonesian authorities in Buitenzorg.

In the weeks ahead, progress was made along the lines agreed. Markets were opened and food distributed. A police force comprising Indonesians, Chinese and Arabs was established.[84] There was a ceremony for its inauguration in the bazaar at which the presence of a British representative was requested. The British were so concerned about the security risks that neither Mellsop nor the Brigade Major were allowed to go for fear of kidnap or assassination. The Mallaby episode was casting its shadow. The Brigade Intelligence Officer, a humble captain and therefore 'expendable', as he himself now puts it, was sent instead. This officer has related his experiences to the author. He says that troops and tanks were on standby to rescue him should he get into trouble. He was driven in state to the ceremony. Speeches were made. He himself had to make a speech. While his words were being translated into the various languages of the assembled crowd, he was able to rack his brains for what to say next. All passed off well and he was entertained at a banquet afterwards.[85] So greatly did Anglo–Indonesian relations improve that, by the end of March, the Buitenzorg area was virtually free from 'hostile activity'.[86]

Despite the frequent armed encounters between British and Indonesian forces, the shooting of prisoners, the burning of villages and the suppression of the outward manifestations of Indonesian nationalism, there was friendship between members of the British occupation force and ordinary Indonesian civilians. In the opinion of Captain Eadie of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, the poorer, rural Indonesians were 'rudderless … they did not want to go back to the state of affairs that had prevailed before the war but at the same time they did not want to get rid of the Dutch who had, after all, been in Indonesia for generations and provided stability'.[87] The British may at times have been perceived as providing a similar measure of stability in contrast to the often brutal actions of Indonesian 'extremists'.

On 16 December 1945, that is, three days after the punitive burning of Bekasi, 161st Indian Infantry Brigade, which was operating in the Batavia area, reported:

'Outlying villages now assured that our tps. mean no harm and are co-operating by selling them garden produce.'[88] In January 1946, troops of 1/1st Punjab stationed in the Batavia area searched a kampong with the assistance of a Dutch screening team: 'No hostile incidents, but useful intelligence gained from locals who seemed quite friendly and willing to co-operate although afraid of reprisals from Extremists.' The Brigade War Diaries record of this operation that the villagers even volunteered information concerning the whereabouts of extremists.[89] There were also instances of co-operation in the countryside around Surabaya. On 2 January 1946, a patrol of the 5th Mahratta Anti-Tank Regiment went to Grissee. The patrol reached Grissee without incident and the local Chief of Police was 'interrogated'. 'The Chief of Police stated that there had been no extremist activity in the town since the last visit of our troops. He also stated that the local police and the inhabitants were willing to co-operate with our forces to maintain law and order in the town.'[90] Sometimes, British troops would be in a position to stop the settling of scores between Indonesians. In April 1946, 5/9th Jats, which was on road protection duty in West Java, captured an Indonesian who was taking two women to be killed for co-operating with Allied troops. 'Prisoner states that he is village constable in TOEGOE and was ordered by leading extremist named PASOEGANDA to collect the two women.'[91] Indonesians would also report the settling of scores. Such an instance is recorded in the War Diaries of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade for June 1946, when the Brigade was operating in and around Bandung: 'Headman of village … NORTH of coy 5 RAJ RIF reported that 20 armed men looted clothes and JAP guilders to the value of f10,000 from his village. Believed that this done as reprisal for inhabitants of village selling chickens to own tps.'[92]

The War Diaries of 4/8th Gurkha Rifles provide a good insight into military-civilian relations in the Bekasi area, to the east of Batavia, during the middle part of 1946. It should be recalled that Bekasi had been burned by the British in December 1945. In early June, the battalion had been in Malaya. It had been brought to Batavia to replace 1st Patialas, an Indian State Force, which was returning to India. From Batavia, the battalion had gone out to Bekasi. A Monthly Security Intelligence Summary contained in its War Diaries reports good relations with local Indonesians during early July: 'Tps coming into closer contact with civilians in this area report that their attitude is always friendly and that they are no longer frightened of the military. The situation has improved considerably within the past three weeks.'[93] A month later, this favourable state of affairs still obtained: Indonesian civilians welcomed the patrol parties of the battalion to the west and east of Bekasi. 'British Officers report that large gatherings of villagers collect who shake them warmly by the hand. Relations with civilians have improved continually since the Bn arrived in the area, and are now most cordial.'[94]

4

ANGLO–DUTCH RELATIONS AND THE BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM JAVA

The tensions of Anglo–Dutch military co-operation in the Batavia area

Tensions between British and Dutch troops had been apparent in Batavia since early on in the occupation. These obliged General Christison to post the Dutch force to the airfield at Tjililitan, to the south of the city, where it established a base for itself. This 'Dutch' force consisted mainly of Ambonese troops of the KNIL, the Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger, or Royal Netherlands Indian Army, but included a few re-mobilized Dutch prisoners of war. Like the British, the Dutch had for centuries recruited indigenous soldiers as they tended to perform better in a difficult climate. The Ambonese members of the KNIL had been the mainstay of Dutch rule in the Indies. Christians from Ambon and other islands, had little love for the Moslem Javanese and had suppressed nationalist disturbances during the inter-war period. They were given extra pay for what was described as 'foreign service' in Java. Their loyalty to the Dutch had caused them to be imprisoned by the Japanese during the occupation. The Ambonese were the indigenous group closest to being a 'martial race', like the Muslims from the North-West Frontier in the British-Indian Army, but it was the 'loyalty' of the Ambonese rather than their military skills which chiefly attracted the Dutch. Recruitment of Ambonese into the KNIL had gone on steadily since the 1870s.

The force to the south of Batavia was commanded by Major-General W. Schilling. In defiance of instructions issued by Christison in October 1945, it came to control a substantial tract of territory in this area by the following month by establishing a secure base for itself and 'clearing' the surrounding area by military action.[1] It is not clear how the force had reconstituted itself. It is possible that Schilling armed those KNIL personnel he found in Batavia who had been imprisoned by the Japanese. Alternatively, or in addition, these might have acquired Japanese weapons by force or persuasion before the Allied landings. It also seems that Dutch and Dutch-colonial personnel were brought in from outside Java. According to a XV Indian Corps situation report for early October 1945, three Dutch battalions, the 'Breenmour', 'Mollinger' and 'Doorman' battalions, had

landed with the British and were operating in the city. Both the 'Breenmour' and 'Mollinger' battalions were 60 per cent 'Indonesian' and 40 per cent Dutch; the Doorman battalion was said to consist of former prisoners of war from Singapore.[2]

The War Diaries of the British and Indian formations serving in the Batavia area at this time contain many references to shooting incidents in which they considered Dutch and Ambonese troops had acted provocatively. 1st Patialas reported that, on 20 November 1945, 'Trigger happy Ambonese started firing in Xth Bn area close to own barracks'. Battalion X was a battalion of the KNIL which had been reconstituted in Batavia after the Japanese surrender. The Patialas stated: 'it is apparent that the Ambonese are completely irresponsible and are a danger to the lives and property of all nationalities.'[3] On 18 December, a patrol of 'D' Company of the Seaforth Highlanders was fired on by Ambonese troops, who subsequently said that they had done so 'by mistake'. On Christmas Day, there was another brush between the Seaforths and the Ambonese. A patrol belonging to 'D' Company investigated firing in a kampong near the Pasar Baroe Police Station. They came under heavy fire so withdrew and returned in greater strength. The firing ceased. The officer in charge of the Ambonese troops who had been responsible for the firing was ordered to withdraw his men from the kampong, which he did. The War Diary commented: 'This was clearly another case of indiscriminate firing by Dutch troops, who it was obvious had started all the trouble themselves.'[4]

Dutch European troops, who, as has been mentioned above, were either in the Batavia area as prisoners of war or who had been prisoners elsewhere in the region and were brought in by the British, ushered in the new year of 1946 in a manner which alarmed their Indian Army counterparts. The War Diaries of 1/16th Punjab recall that all Dutch troops in Batavia resorted to 'indiscriminate firing in celebration of new year's day without previous information to Allied troops'. Dutch troops coming from their own camp fired at an Indian sentry. A platoon of 1/16th Punjab stood to and returned fire. One Indian other rank was killed by a bullet in the head. The platoon was sent out and reported that all Dutch residing in the area had fired with sten guns and rifles.[5]

When it became apparent that Dutch and Ambonese troops were attacking civilians, British troops were obliged to investigate. On 13 February 1946, a Chinese reported to 6/8th Punjab that his village had been raided. A reconnaissance party under a British officer went to the area and discovered that a party of 30 Dutch and Ambonese troops had visited it the previous night, shot dead a 10-year-old boy, injured an Indonesian woman and looted houses. Bullet marks were seen on the walls of the houses.[6]

Occasionally, British and Indian troops would witness cases of brutality with their own eyes. Early on the morning of 5 November 1945, firing was heard at Tjideng, near to where the Seaforth Highlanders were stationed. A captain went to investigate and found six armed Dutchmen of the Auxiliary Military Police 'firing, as hard as they could, at six unarmed Indonesians lying 30 yards away in the same ditch. The Dutch said the Indonesians were massing for an attack'. The captain

managed to calm the situation.[7] The War Diaries of 1st Patialas for 16 December record a similar incident: 'One Indonesian was killed by two Ambonese in front of own barracks. The regimental policeman who was on duty on that side of the perimeter arrested the two Ambonese who were later handed over to Military Police.'[8]

So trigger happy were the Dutch and Ambonese that, on occasions, they even fired at each other. On 18 November, the Seaforth Highlanders heard shooting, in the area in which they were stationed, throughout the day, and 'in practically every case it was found that Dutch troops were firing at nothing in particular'. That afternoon, firing continued in the Tjideng area, 'but the patrol investigating discovered that it was caused by Dutch troops apparently firing at themselves'.[9]

Lengthy reports, particularly those compiled by 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, based in Batavia at this time, point to the ill feeling between British and Indian and Dutch and Ambonese troops, engendered by such incidents. An Intelligence Summary for November 1945 reported that both British and Indian other ranks were inclined to be anti-Dutch. 'They have seen incidents where the Dutch and Ambonese tps have fired, in their opinion, indiscriminately and unnecessarily at inoffensive INDONESIANS. As an immediate consequence of such incidents, they have sometimes suffered themselves from the irritated population.'[10]

Christison, who remained Commander Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies until the end of January 1946, was not oblivious to these tensions. In his opinion, the worst culprits were the Ambonese. He obtained Mountbatten's permission to replace them with a Dutch European battalion which had been trained by the British in Malaya and which was landed on 4 January. This was the first 'regular' Dutch unit to arrive after the war.[11] Whereas battalions of the KNIL always contained companies of 'indigenous' troops, this battalion was composed entirely of Dutch companies and, as such, was part of the metropolitan Dutch Army.[12] In a telegram to the Cabinet Office, Mountbatten concluded that the change-over had been a success: 'The Dutch Marine Battalion is doing its task well and its taking over from the ill-disciplined troops has undoubtedly been a contributory cause to the more settled conditions which now prevail in BATAVIA.'[13]

This may have been Mountbatten's view. It was not the view of those who were on the ground in Batavia over the coming months. On one occasion, British horror at Dutch behaviour in the Batavia area reached the highest level, namely a British Cabinet Minister. In February 1946, Major R. P. H Russell, in charge of a supply company in Batavia, sent a letter to his family, asking them to forward it to Sir Stafford Cripps, his second cousin and President of the Board of Trade in the Attlee Government, presumably in the hope that action would be taken. Russell stated that 'certain acts of brutality' were taking place in the part of Batavia where he was stationed which had 'no possible justification'. He said that 'youths and children, often a dozen a day', came 'creeping' into the office of the company almost every day, 'beaten, mutilated, and in one case (on 15/Feb/46) with his genitals beaten into pulp and bleeding profusely'. He went on to say that 'split heads and broken limbs' were 'almost hourly occurrences' and that 'gunshot

wounds, generally in the stomach or legs', were 'so frequent as to be commonplace'. To Russell, there was no doubt where the blame lay: 'These atrocities are committed in every case by the Dutch. The position will no doubt shortly arise when the British and Indian soldiers may become so seriously annoyed as to take the law into their own hands, and then, of course, anti-Dutch incidents would ensue.'[14]

Sir Stafford Cripps forwarded this letter to Ernest Bevin, who undertook to make representations to Sir Archibald Clark Kerr in Batavia.[15] Clark Kerr, as has been explained, was the senior British diplomat then overseeing talks between Dutch and Indonesian representatives to settle the political future of the territory. Clark Kerr's reply to Bevin was, as far as preventative action was concerned, non-committal, though it reinforced Major Russell's view of the state of affairs. He said that, although the Dutch were committing atrocities, Indonesians were as well. He pointed out that 40 bodies were pulled out of the canal leading to the port of Batavia in the space of six days, some of which were European and Eurasian. He blamed the 'whiff of grapeshot' policy of Admiral Helfrich for Dutch behaviour.

Helfrich was indeed something of a hard-liner who made no attempt to conceal his views. His policy on 'internal security' in Indonesia was as follows: 'when dealing with native rabbles the most profitable way is to hit immediately and hit hard.' Such views engendered the suspicion of General Christison, under whom he was placed in the military hierarchy, as well as that of other British commanders. By this time, Helfrich had returned to the Netherlands and been replaced by General Spoor.[16] By his remarks, he had connived at the actions of his trigger-happy troops and set the tone of Dutch military operations for some time to come.

Clark Kerr admitted that he too had information that Dutch and Ambonese troops were acting harshly and said that, when 'culprits' were handed over to the Dutch authorities for 'disciplinary action', their punishments were 'absurdly light'. By way of example, he said: 'on one occasion, 14 Days C.B. [confined to barracks] was awarded for cold blooded murder'. He also said that there had been 'innumerable cases of looting, stealing of cars and seizure of Indonesian property' by the Dutch. But he concluded by pointing out that the number of instances of Dutch aggression towards Indonesians had recently fallen and that, 'in fairness to the Dutch', actions by them and the Ambonese had been in response to 'intense kidnapping of European and Ambonese persons'.[17]

John Sterndale Bennett, Head of the Far East Department at the Foreign Office, decided not to take the matter further as this would compromise Clark-Kerr at a time when his influence in Java might be 'the deciding factor' in bringing about a settlement between Dutch and Indonesians.[18] Dutch brutality on the ground was apparently deemed by the Foreign Office to be of less importance than achieving Dutch–Indonesian harmony at a higher level. The Foreign Office must have hoped that such harmony would ease the overall British task. In the event, harmony proved elusive and the brutality went on unabated.

It is also worth noting that there were similar tensions in Indochina. When British-Indian and French forces worked together to clear the northern and north-eastern suburbs of Saigon of Viet Minh in October 1945, General Gracey observed

to his superiors that there was a striking contrast between certain French units and made representations about this to the French Commander, General Leclerc. This has been related by Peter Dennis:

> Within three days [of the start of the operation], Gracey was able to report that operations to clear the northern and north-eastern suburbs were going smoothly. French troops were of variable quality: the 5th RIC [Colonial Infantry Regiment] had fought 'well and correctly', but the 11th RIC, released from confinement to barracks after its rampage through the centre of Saigon … had displayed the same weaknesses that had caused it to be removed from an active role a month earlier. It was poorly trained and led, and its troops lacked discipline, but when Gracey raised the matter Leclerc was inclined to shrug it off, clearly feeling that any French troops were worth having to redress the British/French imbalance.[19]

Early March saw the arrival of substantial numbers of Dutch troops from Europe in all parts of Java. In the case of Semarang and Surabaya, they were landed in sufficient strength to allow the British-Indian forces to pull out. In the case of West Java, the Dutch deployment, although significant, was not yet sufficient to allow a complete takeover. British commitments in this sphere comprised Batavia and its environs, Buitenzorg, Bandung and the line of communication running between them. 'U', 'V' and 'W' Brigade Groups landed at Batavia. Each of these Brigade Groups contained four battalions of Dutch European troops.[20] The number of Allied troops in West Java was therefore almost doubled, as none of the five Indian Infantry Brigades was immediately released. With the arrival of such large Dutch formations, it was natural that they would take over from the British a large share of military duties, but this had inherent problems. The newly arrived Dutch formations were as independent-minded as their Dutch and Ambonese predecessors.

Their independence of action has been focused on by Robert Cribb, in his study of the Jakarta People's Militia. He has described how this would prejudice the position of the British by aggravating the situation in their area of operations. He relates how, in early April 1946, the British negotiated with the Tangerang Regiment, a unit of the official Indonesian Republican Army, in order to adjust the demarcation line at Pesing, a few kilometres west of Batavia. The British allegedly agreed to supply arms to this unit if it would fulfil a 'peacekeeping role' on the perimeter. This was agreed by the Regiment, on condition that permission was obtained from the Central Indonesian Army Command in Yogyakarta. On 15 April, while this permission was being sought, Dutch troops attacked and occupied Pesing, against British orders.[21]

A study of British documents reveals the level of friction between the British and Dutch caused by the Dutch attack. Initial Dutch reports stated that Pesing had been found unoccupied. In fact, the Dutch had planned the attack on Pesing – which was in TRI hands – in advance. During the afternoon of 15 April, an officer

on the Staff of Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies was contacted by representatives of the TRI whose troops had been attacked by the Dutch. They asked him to send ambulances to Pesing in order to evacuate Indonesian wounded. This request aroused the staff officer's suspicions and he asked Headquarters 161st Indian Infantry Brigade, which had overall responsibility for the area, for permission to carry out his own investigations. He found that a 'considerable battle' had occurred in Pesing and that the Indonesian casualties were 25 killed and 10 wounded; 27 Indonesians had been taken prisoner by the Dutch – all at the cost of three dead on the Dutch side. He then went to the headquarters of the Dutch battalion responsible for the operation and asked to see the Indonesian prisoners. He was not impressed by what he found. He said that 'their condition was appalling': 'The prisoners had urinated on the floor, and owing to the lack of ventilation the stench was more than any human could stand … One Indonesian whose head was covered in bandages, his face lacerated in several places, ought to have been placed in more sanitary conditions.' These revelations prompted Lieutenant-General Stopford, Commander Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies, to order an enquiry. This revealed that the Dutch attack had been premeditated and ordered without reference to the Commander of 161st Indian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Weston. It had thereby contravened an Operational Order issued by the brigade which stated that actions out of the ordinary had to be reported to the Brigade Headquarters.[22] On 18 April, Brigadier Weston sent a message to Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Sluyter on 18 April to this effect. Sluyter commanded the battalion responsible for the Pesing operation. In extenuation, Sluyter said that Pesing had been captured because both British and Dutch troops had suffered casualties from Indonesian snipers operating in the area, admitted that the attack had been premeditated but said that it had been kept secret 'for reasons of surprise'.[23] Brigadier Weston also made representations to Colonel de Waal, the commander of U Regimental Group which had under command the battalion responsible for the Pesing operation. Waal's official reply was defiant: 'This is to inform you that I cannot repeat NOT accept your orders about boundaries patrol-area … In regard with safety of my troops and of the Indonesian population I insist on fixing boundaries as follows …' Colonel de Waal then went on to specify the boundaries.[24]

Further Anglo–Dutch tensions followed. Dutch forces moved into Tangerang, to the west of Batavia, six weeks later. The official Indonesian armed units pulled out, destroying a few buildings. Irregular Indonesian forces moved in and started killing the Chinese population as there were rumours that Chinese were participating alongside the attacking Dutch force. 'Both Chinese houses and country north-west of Tangerang were burnt out.'[25] Captain Burgess, the Intelligence Officer of 37th Indian Infantry Brigade, recalls reporting the incident to Sjahrir, the Indonesian Prime Minister. The two sat down on a sofa. The Intelligence Officer related what he had seen, causing Sjahrir to weep.[26]

There was further tension in mid-June with a Dutch move to Balaradja, further out to the west of Batavia than Tangerang. This provoked a British rebuke to the Dutch. Brigadier Lauder, the Chief of Staff at Headquarters Allied Forces

Netherlands East Indies made representations to Lieutenant-General Spoor, the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Indian Army, on 18 June: 'The GOC-in-C has today heard of the expedition to BALARAJA, and while he fully appreciates the humanitarian motives for this expedition he must point out that this is a disobedience of orders issued by him.' He said that these orders clearly stated that no operations beyond the 2,000-metre zone west of the Tangerang river were to take place without the permission of Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies and that such permission had not been requested. He went on: 'Effective co-ordination of Allied efforts is impossible if superior commanders' orders are continually disobeyed. The GOC-in-C desires that steps are taken to deal with the officer responsible and directs that operations of this nature will not be undertaken in future without the orders from this HQ.'[27] Five days later, Lieutenant-General Spoor replied apologetically: 'I sincerely regret that no permission was asked for the above expedition. Strict orders have been issued to avoid a repetition while appropriate measures have been taken.'[28] Overall, therefore, Anglo–Dutch relations on the military plane in the Batavia area were uneasy. This must have exacerbated the strain the British occupation force was under.

British relations with Dutch internees

Whilst Anglo–Dutch military co-operation in the Batavia area was fraught with tensions, relations with Dutch civilians at the same time were more complex: there were tensions but there were also many instances of friendship, even intimacy.

There were a great many Dutch internees on Java at the time of the Japanese surrender. Estimates vary. An appendix to an unpublished account of the British occupation in The National Archives in London states that there were 68,553 'genuine (Potsdam) Allied prisoners of war and internees on Java on 15 September 1945'. This meant those who were behind the wire at the time of the Potsdam Conference of July 1945, when Britain first acquired responsibility for the Indies, as distinct from those who were subsequently interned by Indonesian nationalists or who sought refuge in the Allied bridgeheads.[29] Woodburn Kirby, by contrast, states in the official history that there were 'over 80,000 internees in Java, of whom most were Dutch'.[30]

The large numbers of civilian internees, compared with those in Malaya, derived from Dutch colonial methods. The Dutch tended to settle permanently in the Indies, regarding them as their home and not returning to the Netherlands. In this respect, the Dutch differed from the British in Asia, who rarely settled in their colonies. This point was made by Professor Gerbrandy, the wartime Prime Minister of the Dutch Government-in-exile in London. He said that 'the great majority' of Dutch in the Indies 'were of Indies origin who had never set foot outside the country and had lived there all their lives … Unlike British nationals in their colonies, the Indies were our people's homeland'.[31] During his enforced stay in Singapore during December 1945 mentioned in Chapter 2, Colonel Pugh met a young Dutch woman

from the Indies, Barbara Kruyt. This caused him to reflect on the differences in the British and Dutch approaches to their empires which he noted in a letter to his wife: 'The Dutch unlike us come out to Indonesia … and settle there for life. All their interests lie in the place in which they make their home, and they do not return. The better class ones sent their families home periodically and the children to school in Holland.' Of Barbara Kruyt, he observed: 'Barbara except for five years in Holland at school has spent all her life in NEI, her father being something I did not quite pin down in the Netherlands Consular Service.'[32] Another difference was the frequency with which the Dutch intermarried with indigenous peoples. Professor Gerbrandy claimed: 'Intermarriage created a class of Netherlanders of Indies origin who were accepted socially in all circles without reservation. There were no racial prejudices.'[33]

The recent, anthropological studies of Ann Laura Stoler serve as a corrective to this somewhat idealized view of colonial society. During the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, when the Dutch were extending their control in the Indies, attitudes towards interracial relations were far from sympathic: as Stoler says, 'the dangers of cultural and racial hybridity were deeply embedded in popular and scientific discourses whose cast of characters could include subversive Indo-Europeans at one moment and perverse Jews at another.'[34] From the outset of their involvement in the Indies, as Stoler demonstrates, the Dutch instituted concubinage:

> Concubinage served colonial interests … It permitted permanent settlement and rapid growth by a cheaper means than the importation of European women. Salaries of European recruits to the colonial armies, bureaucracies, plantation companies, and trading enterprises were carefully calibrated and kept artificially low. Eliminating expenses for family support and transportation costs was only part of the story. As important, local women provided domestic services for which new European recruits would otherwise have had to pay. In the mid-nineteenth century such arrangements were de rigeur for young civil servants intent on setting up households on their own. Despite clerical opposition (the church never attained a secure and independent foothold in the Indies), by the nineteenth century concubinage was the most prevalent living arrangement for European men. Nearly half of the Indies' European male population in the 1880s were unmarried and living with Asian women. Government decrees designed to limit barrack concubinage in 1903 were never enforced. It was only in the early twentieth century that concubinage was more actively condemned.
>
> Unlike prostitution which could and often did increase the number of syphilitic and therefore non-productive European men, concubinage was considered to stabilize political order and colonial health. It kept men in their barracks and bungalows rather than in brothels or hospitals or, worse, in 'unnatural' liaisons with one another.[35]

In this way, it can be seen that Dutch colonial attitudes were profoundly hypocritical: interracial liaisons were accepted for reasons of economic expediency yet condemned on cultural, pseudo-scientific and, ultimately, political grounds, as Stoler observes: 'mixed unions were perceived as a political danger because they complicated the criteria by which Europeanness could be identified and nationality assigned. Such unions threatened both to destabilize national identity and the Manichean categories or ruler and ruled.'[36]

On the surrender of the Indies to the Japanese, European men were interned at once. Women and children were interned six months later. Eurasians were not interned if they could prove that they were more than half Indonesian; nor were German nationals interned.[37] Initial British policy, laid down in a RAPWI directive of 13 August 1945, was that Dutch prisoners of war and internees could be repatriated to countries other than the Indies only if they themselves happened to be in or near the Indies at the time of the Japanese invasion but had no Dutch or Indies government function or any private connection in the Indies.[38] The British intention at this stage was to gather them in, restore them to health and allow them to continue their pre-war lives in a territory where Dutch authority was being effortlessly restored under British auspices.

As has been seen, the British were forced to change the policy that had been set out in the Anglo-Dutch Civil Affairs Agreement. With the British at loggerheads with Indonesian extremists and Java in a state of revolution, the situation was transformed. The British confined themselves to occupation of the key areas and set up defensive perimeters around them. It would be very difficult to house even those Dutch who had been interned by the Japanese within these perimeters. But this was only part of the problem. The Indonesian revolution was accompanied by social upheaval and the upsurge of communal antagonism so that many minority groups who had not been 'behind the wire' in August 1945 soon became the target of 'extremists'. One such group were the Eurasians, whom the Japanese had given the option of staying out of the camps if they could prove that they were more than half Indonesian. Another group targeted by Indonesian 'extremists' were the Chinese, since they were regarded as supporters of the Dutch. There were also indigenous Indonesians who were thought to be pro-Dutch. All of these categories of people went in fear of their lives and consequently sought protection within the Allied perimeters. Estimates of numbers vary. In late November 1945, Mountbatten, at the request of the Chiefs of Staff, prepared a review of the situation in the Indies for Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary. He stated that there were in Java 40,000 'Oriental displaced persons' whom he was endeavouring to concentrate in the key areas. In early December, Mountbatten reported to the Chiefs of Staff that there were 147,000 'friendly people' in Surabaya, including 90,000 Chinese. This was, he said, too large a number to evacuate; they would have to be left to the mercy of Indonesian 'extremists' if the British were to withdraw from Surabaya.[39]

In order to reduce overcrowding in the Allied-occupied areas, many Dutch internees were evacuated from Java, contrary to original British intentions. Again, the precise figures are problematical. The appendix in the unpublished account

mentioned above, which refers to the figure of 68,553 'genuine (Potsdam) Allied prisoners of war and internees' on Java on 15 September 1945, then gives totals of Allied prisoners of war and internees evacuated from Java by November 1946 to a number of different locations: 14,385 went to Singapore, 58,130 to the Netherlands, 7,144 to Australia, 386 to Borneo, 1,915 to Ceylon, 4,017 to Siam and 251 to Makassar. The total of those evacuated was 86,228.[40] This suggests that not only many of the Dutch but also a substantial number of others were evacuated during the British occupation.

Overcrowding in the Allied-occupied areas was a problem, particularly in West Java, where the bulk of the internees came to be concentrated. In late November 1945, Mountbatten reported to Ernest Bevin that there were 16,000 mainly Dutch prisoners of war and internees in Surabaya, of whom 6,000 had been taken to Singapore; the remainder, he said, would shortly be taken to Batavia where they could be more easily protected.[41] A 23rd Indian Division Weekly Intelligence Summary for February 1946 estimated that there were 65,000 prisoners of war and internees in Bandung.[42] In his autobiography, *Backcloth*, published in 1986, Dirk Bogarde, who was with Divisional Headquarters in Bandung that February, gives the figure of internees there as 45,000.[43] A Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies Intelligence Review for the period October 1945 to November 1946 drew attention to the problem of overcrowding in the key areas:

> Housing was, and in all Allied areas still is, a difficult problem. Except in BATAVIA and, later in SOURABAYA and BANDOENG, only parts of the towns were within the Allied perimeters. Into these limited areas, which had, of course, first of all to accommodate the Allied troops, there flocked nearly the whole of the EUROPEAN population of the N.I. [Netherlands Indies] which before the war had been spread out over the country.[44]

In these circumstances, there was regular contact between personnel of the British-Indian occupation force and Dutch civilians. This part of the Chapter will seek to demonstrate the complex nature of Anglo–Dutch relations at a number of levels. It will examine relations between the Dutch community and, respectively, British officers, British other ranks and Indian other ranks.

A number of British officers have, at the request of the author, set down their recollections of the Dutch internees. Many were sympathetic. Tony Carr, the Intelligence Officer of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, has noted: 'If the Japanese had invaded India between 1942 and 1944 and defeated the British and Indian Armies before capitulating what would we have felt if the Americans had arrived to sort things out? I imagine that is how many Dutch felt.'[45] Gordon Eadie, an officer in the same battalion, remembers one Dutch woman who drank nothing but creme-de-menthe in the battalion mess and played 'The Day is Ended but the Memory Lingers On' over and over again on the piano. It seemed to him that 'she was clearly traumatized by her experience of being in a Japanese camp'. Eadie respected

'the bravery and resilience of the Dutch women and children who were in a pitiful state after being in the hands of the Japanese. Even in the darkest days of this imprisonment the women had educated the children and made sure that they survived'.[46] Captain Wright, who served on the Staff of 9th Indian Infantry Brigade, also recalls feelings of sympathy:

> Those that I met seemed to be very reasonable people. I met people who had been civil servants who had been confined in the camps and who had been treated pretty badly … They never seemed to complain a great deal … I think that I could understand the feelings of the Dutch.[47]

Insight into relations between British officers and Dutch internees is provided in Dirk Bogarde's novel, *A Gentle Occupation*, an ostensibly fictional account of the British occupation of an 'island', and in *Backcloth*, a volume of autobiography. Bogarde was, as has been noted in Chapter 2, Aide-de-Camp to General Hawthorn and his fictional account clearly draws on his experiences. Bogarde describes recently released Dutch women, some single and some awaiting the rescue of their husbands, separately interned in the interior. These women live in the Allied enclave. They form friendships with British officers through everyday contact. One of these women, 'Emmie Van Hoorst', of mixed blood, works as a secretary for the British administration. She is exceptional in this respect: most Dutch women are boycotting the British because they feel that they are not doing enough to restore Dutch authority and resent the use being made of Japanese Surrendered Personnel. 'Emmie' is interviewed for the post by 'Major Nettles', a Staff Officer. He describes the strained state of Anglo–Dutch relations:

> We really are in a hell of a jam here. No one can speak Dutch among us and then this silly boycotting business. We must get things sorted out … I absolutely don't blame your people, you know. I imagine I'd feel much the same. However, no one exactly *asked* the Japs to surrender the way they did, but who else was there with all of you still locked up in your camps and no brave Allies storming the beaches until two weeks later. I am sure they mean well … the Dutch. National pride, anger, bitterness, disappointment, all those things … but really, it is a bit idiotic, doesn't do much good, does it?[48]

'Emmie' forms a relationship with the chief protagonist of the novel, 'Captain Ben Rooke', but they decide not to marry. Another woman, 'Clair Doorn', whose ancestry is exclusively Dutch, has reinstated herself in her house in 'the city' and is living with her son, 'Wim', with whom she had been interned. Her husband, 'Pieter', who was in the Dutch navy, had been interned in another camp. At the beginning of the novel, it is not known whether he is dead or alive. Her relationship with a British officer, 'Major Nigel Pullen', is brought to an end when her husband is brought out of the interior.

In *A Gentle Occupation*, there are hints of a 'free and easy' relationship between British officers and Dutch women. These are conveyed by a Lieutenant in the Mess:

> 'the curfew is rather a bind. Can't move anywhere outside the perimeter unless you are in convoy and the lights go out at twenty-two hundred. Difficult. Parties have to go on all night! Just doss down where you are.' He grinned over his coffee cup. 'Lots of pretty ladies about. Not everyone boycotts us. It's not all durance vile you know.'[49]

In *Backcloth*, Bogarde draws attention to the fact that many of his brother officers married and brought their wives back with them when they left the Indies. They were 'laughing, sparkling-eyed girls' who had worked for the British in an administrative capacity 'but who had only the vaguest idea of what England or Europe might be like, and who would have to face the grey north, and new habits and customs in places like Swindon, Manchester, Macclesfield, or Croydon'. Bogarde confesses that he 'didn't, at that moment, envy them'.[50]

This picture is borne out by documents of the time and by the testimony of eyewitnesses. The War Diaries of 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry record an instance when Dutch internees attended a battalion function in substantial numbers. They state that, in late November 1945, certain officers 'were feeling the need for feminine company.' Consequently, a party was arranged to take place in the battalion mess. The battalion adjutant 'took his pick from the camp and the guests, adequately escorted, duly appeared'. Beer and sherry were consumed and everyone enjoyed themselves. 'Diversions were further provided by shells falling nearby and three times the ladies had to be hurried out to the slit trenches. The lack of space in these trenches was appreciated by some of the younger officers.'[51]

There were marriages. Lieutenant Tony Carr, the Intelligence Officer of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, was based in Bandung in November 1945 with his battalion. Life was easy and enjoyable:

> I had a large office with an English speaking Dutch girl-secretary, the latest typewriter and as much paper (and misinformation to put on it) as could be wished for. Reams of Situation Reports were produced for anyone with the time or inclination to read them; I don't know whether brigade HQ ever did but I'm quite sure that the CO didn't. All he wanted to know was how many pemoedas and where. As he usually knew this without consulting me, I was allowed to play happily with maps, enemy organisational charts and the secretary until such time as he had something more useful for me to do.[52]

Lieutenant Carr married his secretary, Pauline Angelique Eyken, on 12 February 1946 at the Protestant Church in Landvaad Logeweg. For the marriage to be legal in the eyes of the British and Dutch authorities, it 'had to be solemnized twice,

once according to Dutch law & custom, & afterwards as a normal British Military Wedding'. The reception was held in the battalion mess and there were over 100 guests. Major Arkell arrived during this reception and took over the post of second-in-command of the battalion.[53] He too became engaged to a Dutch woman but tragedy struck when he was killed in an ambush in the area of Bekasi, to the east of Batavia, on 21 August. [54] It fell to Lieutenant Carr to break the news of his death to his fiancée.[55]

Captain Laughland, the officer who was sitting next to Brigadier Mallaby in the car when he was killed, also married a Dutch woman. After his ordeal in Surabaya and subsequent questioning in Batavia, he rejoined his unit, 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, in Central Java. He was employed as Brigade Transport Officer and had to work closely with the RAPWI Organisation to locate internee camps in the area and provide transport so that the internees could be brought to safety. In this work, the RAPWI Organization had recourse to the internees themselves, who knew the locations of the camps. It was in that capacity that Laughland worked closely with one former Dutch internee who became his wife.[56]

There were, ostensibly, reasons why others were strongly opposed to forming close relationships. Major Henstock, a Company Commander in 5/6th Rajputana Rifles, had little liking for the Dutch, believing that they had ruled the Indies harshly and that they deserved to be confronted with the problem of Indonesian nationalism. Consequently, he felt disinclined to acquire a Dutch girlfriend.[57] Such feelings could be mutual. In Bandung in February 1946, the time of Lieutenant Carr's marriage to Miss Eyken, a 23rd Indian Division Weekly Intelligence Summary reveals that there was a feeling on the part of the Dutch that British officers had 'taken the line of least resistance' by entertaining 'the type of woman who collaborated, and, in some cases, were the mistresses of JAP offrs.'[58]

Relations between Dutch internees and British other ranks were as mixed as those with British officers. When the Seaforth Highlanders were stationed in Bandung in the spring of 1946, it would appear from a report on the morale of the men of the battalion, written by Major Maclagan, the battalion's temporary commander, that other ranks forged a link with 'decent Dutch families' – presumably those who were living in their own homes in the city. The report said, somewhat optimistically: 'most of them prefer this type of family life to the making of chance acquaintances and temporary friendships, with girls of less respectable upbringing.'[59] In two instances, both in May 1946, men of the Seaforth Highlanders were married to Dutch women. The Battalion War Diaries record for 15 May: 'CSM PETTIGREW was married to a Dutch girl in BATAVIA this morning'; for 16 May: 'L/Cpl HILL of the Orderly Room was married to a Dutch girl in BANDOENG this morning.'[60]

There was also a negative side to relations between British other ranks and Dutch civilians. There were instances of British personnel guarding RAPWI Camps being boycotted by the inmates, reminiscent of the situation described by 'Major Nettles' to 'Emmie Van Hoorst'.[61] The state of relations between men of 1st Seaforth Highlanders and Dutch civilians in Bandung in the Spring of 1946 was dealt with

at length in the report on the morale of the battalion mentioned above. Its findings were not heartening:

> The general attitude towards the Dutch is not one of great friendliness. This may be due partly to a lack of understanding of what the majority of the Dutchmen out here have been through over the last three years, but it is greatly influenced by the often openly rude and hostile attitude of the Dutch themselves … To be told, as some of my men were, on entering a cafe in BANDOENG, to 'clear out' as they were not wanted, is not conducive to the fostering of friendly relations. To be told also, by individual Dutchmen, on occasions, that the British and Indian troops shouldn't be in JAVA, that they were quite useless and a nuisance, and that Britain was trying to grab the NEI for herself, merely adds insult to injury – as the majority of the men themselves hold the view that we shouldn't be doing the dirty work for the Dutch.

It is not unlikely that instances of fraternization between British soldiers and Dutch women could have provoked the hostility of Dutch men. Mention has been made of the good state of relations between the men of the Seaforth Highlanders and Dutch women. The report quoted from above recognized that the warmth of these relations would in turn antagonize Dutch men. The report drew a parallel with the situation 'pertaining in the UK at the time of the American 'invasion' – a time when our men felt some jealousy towards the newcomers, whereas, in general, they were welcomed by the womenfolk. This possibility helps to explain the attitude of the Dutch towards us now!'[62]

If relations between Dutch internees and British officers and other ranks were mixed, those between Dutch internees and Indian other ranks were uniformly distant and sometimes almost hostile. A 23rd Indian Division Weekly Intelligence Summary for February 1946 stated that the Dutch in Bandung had heard of numbers of Indian troops 'who openly espouse the INDON cause'.[63] Some Indian troops had deserted to the Indonesian side. Others may have been broadly sympathetic to the cause of Indonesian nationalism. Since there were few deserters, it was somewhat paranoid of the Dutch to become concerned. The Indian attitude to the Dutch was reported in a 1st Indian Infantry Brigade Security Intelligence Summary for April 1946. This stated that 'the feelings of … INDIAN Troops towards the Dutch continue to show bitterness'. A 'unit report' was quoted in support of this assessment: 'The cold, foreign, contemptible and disgraceful attitude of Dutch men and women alike towards Indian ranks, officers and other ranks alike is immensely disliked.' The Intelligence Summary stated that, though this was 'possibly an overstatement, there is no doubt that since Dutch people do not understand our method of treating all our troops as equals their attitude is therefore inclined to treat Indians as they do their own locals'. Mention was then made of British efforts to improve relations and difficulties in the way of this: 'Every effort is made to explain the Dutch to the troops, but this is difficult in view of the Dutch

attitude and their extraordinary ineptitude at putting out any constructive propaganda themselves.'[64] It is fair to say that, since Indian other ranks would have had little or no understanding of English, still less Dutch, opportunities for social interaction between them and the Dutch would have been, effectively, non-existent.

The Dutch takeover in Central and East Java

The first areas of Java to be taken over by Dutch forces from Europe were Central and East Java. These were the easiest areas to relieve in their entirety because the British presence was confined to coastal enclaves, unlike that in West Java, which comprised the cities of Batavia, Buitenzorg and Bandung and the line of communication running between them. Dutch troops were landed here too at the same time that they were introduced in East and Central Java but, owing to the larger commitment needed for that area, they were not able to take over West Java entirely and had to work with formations of 23rd Indian Division until the arrival of further reinforcements. The tensions that arose from this have been examined earlier in the Chapter. The schedule of reoccupation in Central and East had been agreed between Mountbatten and the British Chiefs of Staff in February 1946.[65]

Planning meetings between British and Dutch commanders were held to arrange the details of the military takeover. One such meeting took place on 24 February 1946 at Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies and reveals the extent of military collusion between the two sides. Colonel Armitage, a British Staff Officer responsible for liaison with Dutch forces, 'stated that in general equipment, spares, vehicles, and ammunition, would be handed over to the Dutch' with the exception of 'certain items' which the British wished to retain. Lieutenant-General Spoor, Helfrich's replacement as Commander of Dutch Forces in the Indies, stated that the Dutch would be prepared to take everything the British could give them.[66] Helfrich's replacement, as has been mentioned earlier in this Chapter, had been a political matter. The British had been appalled at his belligerent attitude to the political situation in Indonesia and his disinclination to rein in the disorderly behaviour of his troops.

The reintroduction of Dutch troops was complicated by the delicate political situation. Talks were going on between Dutch and Indonesian representatives under the auspices of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, to which the British attached great importance. They desired a settlement of the political future of the territory and feared that the landing of large numbers of Dutch troops at Surabaya, Semarang and Batavia would compromise the chances of a settlement. Dutch troops were poised in Malaya, where they had received training from the British, and were due to be shipped to Java at any moment.

In the official history, Woodburn Kirby implies that the landing of Dutch troops was an orderly affair: 'The landing of Dutch troops in Java … planned for the 3rd March, was postponed till the 9th to allow negotiations between Van Mook and Sharir [sic] to get well under way.'[67] One unpublished document does not support

this interpretation. In a memorandum which he sent to Mountbatten on 27 February 1946, Commodore de Salis, the Principal Sea Transport Officer in Southeast Asia Command who had to provide shipping for the move of the Dutch troops, revealed the way in which plans had been constantly shifted. On 20 February, he was told to move 8,350 troops and 200 vehicles to arrive at the three Java ports on 1 March. He was also told that a further 11,500 troops and 390 vehicles were to be moved as soon as possible after this and that 2,000 British and Indian troops were to be withdrawn on the arrival of the first Dutch troops. On 22 February, he was told that the move might have to be postponed but that he should continue as before. On the morning of 23 February, the move of troops and vehicles was postponed. That afternoon, De Salis was told that the move would take place as originally planned. On 24 February, the date of the arrival of the first Dutch troops was provisionally altered to 2 March, but this was said to depend on the negotiations on Java. On the morning of 25 February, the date for the arrival of the first Dutch troops was set for no earlier than 4 March but no later than 9 March. That same afternoon, the dates were moved yet again: Dutch forces were to arrive no earlier than 5 March but no later than 9 March. On 26 February, Commodore de Salis was asked to consider the implications of bringing the arrival date forward to 3 March.

Such constant changes meant that ships had to be held in reserve to be ready at any given moment. De Salis said in his memorandum that this was a waste of scarce shipping resources. Although stating that he was not in a position 'to assess the operational necessities of the changes of plan', he was blunt in his criticism of the way in which the move had been handled: 'the shipping at my disposal is now barely sufficient for the needs of the theatre, and apparent misuse of this shipping can only have the effect of rendering requests for further ships to be regarded with distrust by the authorities at home.' Replying to this memorandum on 5 March, Major-General Kimmins, Assistant Chief of Staff Southeast Asia Command, explained briskly why the changes had been ordered: 'The frequent changes in plan, whilst regretted, were due to over-riding political considerations, and could not, therefore, be avoided.' He did nevertheless admit that representations had been made to Sir Archibald Clark Kerr that the plans could not be altered further as this would have 'serious implications'.[68]

1st Netherlands Marine Brigade, which had come from Europe, was earmarked for Surabaya in East Java.[69] By 22 March, this unit had relieved 123rd Indian Infantry Brigade in the west sector of Surabaya. During April, Headquarters 'A' Division and 'X' Regimental Group arrived. The arrival of these two units marked the completion of the concentration of Dutch forces in East Java. By sending in two Regimental Groups, the Dutch were merely replacing the two Indian Infantry Brigades with an equivalent number of troops. During the transition period, Dutch officers would go out on operations with British and Indian units in the company of British officers to see how things were done. Captain Lloyd-Jones was a young British officer serving with 2nd Buffs. The battalion had been brought into Surabaya to replace 2nd West Yorks in January 1946. Lloyd-Jones recalls a Dutch officer

saying to him during one of these operations that the Dutch deserved their present problems in Indonesia as they had been hard on the Indonesians before the war. Local Dutch commanders appraised the situation and decided that 1st Netherlands Marine Brigade would be responsible for manning the outer defences of Surabaya while 'X' Regimental Group would be responsible for guard duties within the city. By 11 May, the Dutch had completed their dispositions and 5th Indian Division was free to return to India.[70]

In the case of the Dutch takeover in Semarang in Central Java, the British were initially fearful of the ramifications that this would have for the local situation and on their own troops. 5th Parachute Brigade, which had arrived in Semarang in January 1946 to take over from 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, had known since the end of February that it was to be relieved by 'T' Regimental Group and made preparations to ensure that the changeover would go as smoothly as possible. The paratroops 'were told plainly that no friction would be tolerated and that the motto was "peace at any price".' Prominent Indonesians and Chinese in Semarang were told that the Dutch would be under British command. Such measures proved successful and the landing of Dutch troops went ahead without incident. In his report on the operations of 5th Parachute Brigade in Semarang, Brigadier Darling, the Brigade Commander, ascribed the satisfactory state of affairs to 'the co-operation and understanding' of Colonel Van Langen, who commanded 'T' Regimental Group. This officer had served in Java before the war and was therefore reasonably aware of local conditions. The only incident which marked the arrival of Dutch forces in Semarang, according to Brigadier Darling, was that about 1,000 Indonesians left the town, only to return within a few days, 'disillusioned, having been robbed of their goods and clothes by the extremists'.[71] The first Dutch formations of 'T' Regimental Group to land were 2nd Battalion 6 RIR Netherlands Army and the advance party of the sinister sounding 1st Stootroepen Battalion. This landing took place on 12 March. More Dutch troops followed the next day. These were the remnants of 1st Stootroepen Battalion and 2/13th Light Infantry Battalion.[72] Nevertheless, 'shipping problems' – presumably a lack of shipping – meant that 5th Parachute Brigade could not leave straightaway. There was an overlap period of two months. Plenty of time for friction to develop, it might be imagined, but, on the contrary, relations between British and Dutch appear to have been cordial. There was also a considerable amount of military collaboration. The British compiled a dossier of information on conditions in Semarang which was widely issued to the Dutch forces.[73] This did not detail 'wanted' Indonesians; rather, it contained a great deal of innocuous information about the situation in general and enjoined that the good relations which the British had established with the various local communities be maintained.[74]

Liaison parties of three British officers and a number of non-commissioned officers were attached to each of the three Dutch battalions and training was provided in signals and the use of mortars and machine-guns. Brigadier Darling had a high opinion of the relieving Dutch forces:

> The men in the DUTCH battalions were of good material and many of them had served in the underground movement in EUROPE and some with the DUTCH Forces operating with the BRITISH-AMERICAN Armies. They were therefore fully capable of looking after themselves. The following instance shows the calibre of some of these men: a DUTCH force was given the task of carrying out an operation outside the perimeter, which included the destruction of some rather inferior types of roadblocks. The DUTCH Company Commander was asked whether he required the assistance of BRITISH sappers to do the job. The reply was that the assistance was not necessary and that he himself could do the job provided he was given some explosive. He was asked whether he was sure he knew how to handle explosives and without a flicker of an eyelid he replied that he thought he would be able to manage. It afterwards transpired that that officer was famous in HOLLAND for having singlehandedly blown up a complete factory in ROTTERDAM.

The arrival of the Dutch made possible the evacuation of the Japanese battalion, the Kido Butai, as there were now enough Allied troops to hold the town perimeter. Japanese nationals were evacuated at the same time. A total of 1,500 Japanese soldiers and civilians were despatched to Gallang Island, which was used as a staging post in the repatriation programme.[75] On landing, the Dutch forces were given British weapons and ammunition. Further supply arrangements were undertaken during the takeover period.[76] Most importantly, British tanks were left behind.[77] Brigadier Darling observed: 'This procedure … worked extremely smoothly and by the time that the Brigade withdrew from SEMARANG, 'T' Regimental Group were firmly in the saddle.'[78] The advance party of 5th Parachute Brigade had left for Malaya on 17 March; the remainder of the Brigade had left Semarang by 17 May.[79]

The Dutch takeover in West Java

At the same time, the Dutch were gradually assuming a more active role in West Java, which was now 'secure' following British actions in the main cities and the deployment of more forces along the convoy route, related in Chapter 3. At Bandung, the Dutch 'V' Brigade relieved 1st Indian Infantry Brigade on 1 April. It took over the south of the city to begin with, under overall British control. Its task was to maintain law and order and to prevent 'arson, looting and kidnapping'. An Operational Instruction from Major-General Hawthorn, the Commander of 23rd Indian Division, to the Dutch force commander, Colonel J. A. Meyer, indicates that there was a coolness between the new force and that which it was relieving. General Hawthorn withheld tank support 'until your DUTCH troops and my INDIAN troops have more experience of each other'. Armoured cars, however, were handed over. Hawthorn also requested 'the highest standard of discipline' and adherence to the curfew order and said that he was arranging for a series of

lectures to Dutch troops on the Indian Army 'to facilitate close co-operation and comradeship' between the two forces.[80] 1st Indian Infantry Brigade went to Tjiandjoer, on the convoy route.[81] During April, tanks were handed over to the Dutch and instruction was given to tank crews.[82] As in East and Central Java, the Dutch in West Java were being given the benefit of British military hardware. During this time, relations between Dutch and British troops were good but there was friction between Dutch and Indian troops. The language barrier did not help. The following hope was expressed in a Weekly Intelligence Summary for the period: 'A series of lectures to DUTCH troops on different INDIAN army castes and customs has been arranged and should do much to make for more tolerant understanding.'[83]

On 26 June, 23rd Indian Division Headquarters, which had moved to Bandung from Batavia in February in response to the increasingly turbulent situation, departed the city, along with 49th Indian Infantry Brigade. By this time, Dutch 'B' Division Headquarters was established, having under command V Brigade and later 'W' Brigade, which relieved 1st Indian Infantry Brigade at Tjiandjoer on 5 July. The only area of the Bandung–Buitenzorg road which remained the responsibility of the British was the Poentjak Pass, which was held by the Seaforth Highlanders. At Buitenzorg, 37th Indian Infantry Brigade was relieved by Headquarters Royal Artillery 23rd Indian Division, otherwise known as Buitenzorg Brigade, on 8 May. 36th Indian Infantry Brigade arrived at Batavia from Tjiandjoer on 22 April and sailed for India on 4 May. 37th Indian Infantry Brigade arrived at Batavia from Buitenzorg on 8 May to relieve 161st Indian Infantry Brigade, which sailed for India on 23 May. The arrival of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade in Batavia along with 23rd Indian Division Headquarters allowed the Dutch 'W' Brigade to move to Tjiandjoer. On 23 July, 49th Indian Infantry Brigade was relieved by part of 'U' Brigade and thus became a Reserve Brigade for the area. In this way, therefore, the Dutch had built up their presence in West Java by taking over Bandung completely, along with Tjiandjoer on the convoy route, and had built up a stronger presence in Batavia.[84]

At an Anglo–Dutch ministerial meeting in London on 12 April 1946 at which Schermerhorn, the Dutch Prime Minister, Attlee, Bevin and Lord Alanbrooke, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, were present, it had been decided that British forces would remain in Indonesia until the end of the year, by which time Dutch replacements would be available.[85] This decision had been taken at a time when it seemed as if the Dutch–Indonesian political negotiations then in progress in the Netherlands would produce an improvement in the situation on the ground in Indonesia; the British may therefore have been disposed to co-operate militarily with the Dutch for the sake of harmonious relations.[86] This decision was communicated to Indonesian leaders during August. It therefore became clear to all parties that, if a political agreement could not be reached before this date then there might well be an outbreak of hostilities on the departure of the British. The British continued to concern themselves with reaching a political agreement. With the departure from the scene of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, who had been unable to

bring about an understanding between the two parties, this task fell to Lord Killearn, another high ranking diplomat. Killearn, British Ambassador in Cairo during the war, had been appointed Special Commissioner for Southeast Asia and had arrived in Singapore in March 1946. His remit was chiefly that of sorting out the food shortages in the region. In May, a new government was formed at The Hague in the aftermath of a general election. This government decided that a Special Commission would be sent to Batavia to resume political negotiations with the representatives of the Indonesian Republic. In anticipation of the arrival of the Special Commission, which was due to arrive in Indonesia in September, Killearn went to Batavia at the end of August. From there, he went on to Yogyakarta, where he met Sjahrir and his cabinet. He has described this meeting in a report on his activities in the region: 'I urged upon them the importance of their showing themselves on their side willing and prepared for negotiations with the Commission-General on their arrival, and added that, in my view, the conclusion of the truce was an almost essential prelude to successful talks.'[87]

The British were intent on limiting military activity in order to create an environment in which negotiations leading to a political settlement and a military truce might stand a reasonable chance of success.[88] Killearn's unpublished diaries are a valuable source for the atmosphere in Batavia during this final period of the British occupation. They illustrate the continuing chaos and confusion. Shortly after his arrival, Killearn discovered how military developments could threaten political discussions. On 27 August, a number of Indonesian 'extremists' broke through the Allied perimeter. An operation was undertaken to push them back outside. Two Indonesians were killed; the British suffered no casualties. Killearn requested that Brigadier Forman, Mansergh's Chief of Staff, come to his office the following day:

> I admitted at once that the opportunity to carry out this operation had been particularly ill-chosen, seeing that it coincided almost to the hour with my interview with the Indonesians yesterday, when I had been putting it to them how absurd it was to make elaborate arrangements to sit peacefully round a table with the other side, whilst at the same time the partisans of each side were busily cutting the throats of the other.

It was agreed that, in future, Killearn would be informed of military operations in advance.[89]

Military orders were issued on 29 August. Operations were to be curtailed by limiting patrolling outside all the Allied perimeters – Dutch as well as British – to a distance of 2,000 metres. It was also agreed that, within this limit, operations would be undertaken only in company strength, that is, a maximum of approximately 100 men. If hostile Indonesian formations infiltrated within the perimeters and constituted a threat to Allied troops or the civilian population, however, they were considered to have acted offensively and permission was given for the use of 'supporting arms' to reduce casualties among 'clearing troops'. If it

were desired to carry out extensive operations, permission had to be obtained from Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies. The role of the navy and the RAF was also restricted.[90] The navy had up to this time been used in preventing Indonesian craft from bringing arms ashore. These operations were known as 'anti-gun running patrols'.[91] The RAF, as has been seen in earlier chapters, had bombed and strafed hostile Indonesian positions and had provided air cover for convoys, particularly on the West Java convoy route. By this time, the West Java convoy route had been handed over to the Dutch. Air cover ceased to be provided for convoys after 20 September although it was arranged that one aircraft was to 'stand by' at Kemajoran airfield at Batavia on days on which there was a convoy so as to provide support if required. There was little hostile activity on the convoy route at this time.[92]

The Dutch Commission-General arrived in Batavia on 18 September to begin negotiations with the Indonesian Republican representatives. Lord Killearn went to join them on 21 September, travelling from Singapore. In his report, Killearn recorded that the Indonesian representatives initially raised objections to proceeding with a truce unless the despatch of troops from the Netherlands to Indonesia were halted. He noted that they had agreed to waive their objection to the arrival of Dutch forces when he had discussed the matter with them in Yogyakarta. Eventually, on 14 October, a truce was signed by Lord Killearn, Lieutenant-General Mansergh, Stopford's successor as Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies, and the Dutch and Indonesian leaders.[93] On Java, the only area in which the truce was brought into force was north Bandung, under Dutch control at that stage. There were 'deadlocks' at Bekasi, Tangerang, Buitenzorg and Tjiandjoer, meaning that hostilities continued.[94]

A Joint Truce Commission, consisting of Dutch and Indonesian members and chaired by Lord Killearn, was supposed to solve such difficulties, but it was dogged by problems. One of its members was the Commander-in-Chief of the TRI, General Soedirman. When his train got to the Allied perimeter outside Batavia, objection was made by the British military command to his bringing with him 30 armed Indonesians as his bodyguard. Soedirman took umbrage and returned to the interior. According to Killearn, the Joint Truce Commission was 'stymied in his absence'. Sjahrir, 'who throughout made no secret that he was perplexed and annoyed at this bodyguard being brought here at all', decided that he would try and lure the General back, by which time no-one knew where he was. Killearn was exasperated: 'it really is most baffling that silly little points like this should be so often intruding … What a life!' The following day, it was discovered that Soedirman had gone back to Yogyakarta. Killearn expressed incredulity: 'Did you ever! Really the follies of men are beyond belief.' Soedirman finally arrived in Batavia on 2 November, 'surrounded by guards, whom he proceeded to post round British GHQ. This was too much for Mansergh who flew right off the handle and refused to attend the meeting until they were withdrawn.'[95]

On 24 October, the British left Buitenzorg, handing over to the Dutch. A Dutch Brigade of 'C' Division took over command of the town in two phases: firstly, the

outlying posts were taken over, then commitments within the town itself. Indonesian resistance increased slightly in response to the arrival of the Dutch, in that there was a certain amount of sniping and 'jittering', but there were no large-scale clashes.[96]

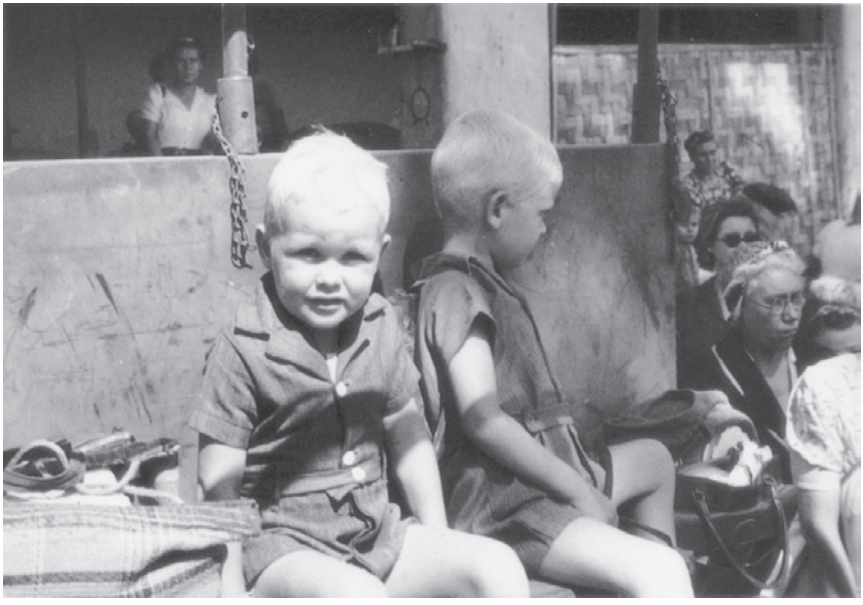
Towards the end of the occupation, the British presence came to be concentrated in Batavia prior to the final withdrawal. Despite the fact that the British had done so much to bequeath to the Dutch a position of military strength, relations between troops on the ground continued to be poor. On 28 September 1946, a Dutch sentry fired at a lorry containing other ranks belonging to the Seaforth Highlanders. A private was killed and three were injured, one seriously. An International Court of Enquiry was held concerning the incident.[97] A few days later, the Seaforth Highlanders left Java for good. According to Gilbert Mackereth, the British Consul-General in Batavia, they left the city 'shaking their fists as they drove down to the port at a battalion of astonished Dutch soldiery fresh out from Holland and shouting the Indonesian war cry of "Merdeka" (freedom).'[98] Russell Jones, a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Marines guarding the port area at this time, recalls that it was not uncommon to see an Indonesian lying dead in the street a short way away from Dutch sentries. He says that these sentries were 'trigger-happy', a phrase widely used by British personnel at the time.[99]

The British occupation of Java was fast coming to an end. 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, the reserve brigade for the Batavia area, had already left for Malaya on 10 September. 1st Indian Infantry Brigade handed over its responsibilities to II Brigade of the newly arrived Dutch 'C' Division and departed for India. 23rd Indian Division Headquarters handed over operational command to the Dutch 'C' Division on 16 November, with the exception of the Batavia garrison area, which remained the responsibility of 37th Indian Infantry Brigade under the direct command of Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies. On 27 November, 37th Indian Infantry Brigade handed over operational command of the Batavia garrison area to III Brigade of 'C' Division and sailed for Malaya. The same day, Rear Headquarters 23rd Indian Division departed for Malaya. Headquarters XV Indian Corps handed over command to Headquarters Royal Netherlands Indian Army on 27 November and sailed for India on the 29th. On 30 November, Southeast Asia Command ceased to exist.[100]

The Seaforth Highlandlers disembarking at Batavia docks. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3679).

Anti-Dutch posters such as this greeted the Allies when they arrived in Batavia. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3680).

Indian troops, with armour in support, fight their way into Central Java to rescue internees. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3683).



Some of the internees they came to rescue. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3684).

The tensions of Anglo–Dutch military co-operation: these Ambonese troops of the KNIL had stopped a group of Indonesians in their car and were interrogating them until the arrival on the scene of a British officer and his orderly. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3685).

Indonesians at a political meeting in Bandung, their message clear for all to see. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3681).

Indian troops disinterring the remains of their comrades, survivors of the aircrash near Bekasi massacred by Indonesian extremists and buried in a mass grave. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3686).

Search of a village in East Java conducted by Indian troops of 5th Indian Division. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3687).

A group of British other ranks enjoying a day out in Medan, northern Sumatra, observed by a local. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3689).

The British withdrawal from East Java: an Indian sepoy boards ship at Surabaya, bound for India. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3688).

The outgoing commander and his successor: General Christison, on the right, greets General Stopford, on the latter's arrival at Batavia airfield. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3682).

Gereral Hawthorn, Commander of 23rd Indian Division, inspects 1st Patialas at their farewell parade. Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM FLM 3690).

5

THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF SUMATRA

The arrival of British forces in Sumatra

Sumatra, then as now, was far less densely populated than Java. The census carried out by the Dutch administration in 1930 states that the population of Sumatra was 8,238,570; the population of Java and Madura, by contrast, was 41,719,524.[1] Sumatra is a much larger island. A chain of mountains runs inland, parallel with the west coast. The eastern side of the island is marshy and humid. The climate is markedly hotter. The heat was such that the British did not attempt to do much during the day. Caroline Coham-Fleming, who worked for the Red Cross in Medan and married a British officer, remembers 'long, hot, sultry days'.[2] Glyn Moyle, an 18-year-old private in the South Wales Borderers, also stationed in Medan, says: 'It was so hot. It was hotter than Burma. You couldn't do anything during the day. An officer tried to organize a parade but was reprimanded by a superior.'[3] There is a great deal of jungle and a wider range of exotic flora and fauna. It is much more inaccessible and large areas of the interior are populated by tribal peoples. There are very few large towns and distances between towns and villages are great. Communications are less developed: there is no railway linking up the island and roads are of poor quality.

As in Java, before the initial British landings, decisions had to be made at South East Asia Command Headquarters about how Sumatra would be occupied. A planning paper prepared by Headquarters South East Asia Command Joint Planning Staff entitled 'Re-occupation of Java, Sumatra and Borneo', dated 16 September 1945, identified the areas on Sumatra where British forces would land. It admitted that more information was available about Allied prisoners of war and internees on Sumatra than on Java. It seems therefore that the selection of entry points on Sumatra was governed by Allied knowledge of the whereabouts and numbers of internees, whereas on Java the British were simply selecting the main cities in the hope that internee camps would be in the vicinity: 'The APWI [Allied prisoner-of-war] situation, as known, shows that there are some 10,000 in the PADANG area, some 7,000 in the MEDAN area, and some 4,000 in the PALEMBANG area.' Of these, according to the report, around 3,000 from the

Padang area, 2,000 from the Palembang area and only 100 from the Medan area needed to be evacuated.[4] This was, in fact, an overestimate of the number of prisoners of war and internees on Sumatra. The total figure was only 13,551.[5]

The paper also dealt specifically with Padang. It pointed out that Padang was the Japanese Headquarters in Sumatra. Its reoccupation was deemed a priority over Medan and Palembang not for that reason but because it was felt that, in the event of an 'emergency', by which the report's authors presumably meant widespread Indonesian unrest, it would be easy to move forces from Malaya to Palembang and Medan on the east coast of Sumatra but not Padang on the west coast.[6]

Lieutenant-Colonel Rossier, the Commanding Officer of 1st Lincolns, one of the battalions which made up the occupation force on Sumatra, gave other reasons for the selection of Padang in his section of the published history of the battalion. He said Padang was the main trade centre for central Sumatra. It contained the largest cement works in Indonesia and one of the two coal mines on the island.[7]

For all these reasons, the Joint Planning Staff at Headquarters South East Asia Command decided that 'initial reoccupation' should be at Padang. One brigade group should arrive there around 10 October. Another should arrive at Medan about 6 November and the reoccupation of Palembang should 'await detailed information regarding minesweeping, availability of aircraft from BURMA, and availability of the necessary army forces'.[8] It was not specified whether Palembang would be occupied by sea, air or land.

The difficulty with Palembang was that, unlike Padang and Medan, which were on or near the coast, it was situated 60 miles inland. It was in the south of Sumatra on the Moesi River in marshy country. It was important for the British not only because of the prisoners of war and internees in its vicinity but also because there were two oil refineries nearby, Pladjoe and Soengei Gerong. Before the war, Pladjoe had been run by the Anglo–Dutch company Shell Oil and Soengei Gerong by the American company Standard.[9] If the oil installations in South Sumatra could be got running again, these refineries would play their part in the economic rehabilitation of the Indies.

Over and above these considerations for the choice of the key areas of occupation was geography. Medan, Padang and Palembang were situated far apart from each other. By occupying them, the British would be able to spread themselves as extensively as possible throughout Sumatra. At the time of planning, in mid-September 1945, it was not anticipated that the British would have to confine themselves to the occupation of the key areas, venturing beyond them only on a temporary basis.

As with Java, the British decided, after the initial planning stage but before deploying troops, to limit the scope of their operations: they would confine themselves to the occupation of the key areas rather than administer the whole of Sumatra. This was because of a growing realization that the Indonesian Republic, proclaimed in Batavia on 17 August, had under its command substantial armed forces, that there were other armed groups operating independently of Republican

control and that many Indonesians were hostile to a resumption of Dutch rule, which they supposed the British to be facilitating.

It has already been noted how the Japanese had set in motion plans for an independent Indonesia before the surrender. When Indonesian independence was proclaimed, Sumatra had been declared to be a province of the new republic. Two Sumatran delegates had been sent to Batavia by the Japanese. The delegates were to have their say on the form of the new Republic and what Sumatra's role in it would be in the discussions that were taking place. They were Teuku Mohammad Hassan and Dr Amir. Hassan was a lawyer. Although not known as a political leader before 1945, he was, in the words of Anthony Reid, 'active in religious and social matters'. Amir was a doctor who had specialized in psychiatry, had written widely on questions of culture, philosophy and popular science and had been personal physician to the Sultan of Langkat from 1937. In Batavia, Hassan was declared to be the Governor of Sumatra.

The revolution was slower to manifest itself on Sumatra. When Hassan and Amir returned to Medan at the end of August, it seemed to them, according to Anthony Reid, that local Indonesian politicians and traditional rulers, the Sultans of the East Coast Residencies, were reluctant to act, fearful both of the Japanese and of the returning Allies, the British and Dutch. Then things began to change. News of the development of the Indonesian revolution in Batavia and throughout Java spread and youth groups, trained by the Japanese, began to take matters into their own hands. Radical leaders came to the fore, attempting to harness the new spirit of nationalism. The *merah-putih*, the Indonesian red and white flag, began to appear on public buildings. The Japanese retreated from any position of prominence. Stimulus to the Indonesian national movement on Sumatra was provided by General Christison on Java, who, on 1 October 1945, gave 'de facto' recognition to the Indonesian Republic. On 6 October, the Indonesian Republican flag was officially raised at a ceremony in Medan with thousands in attendance. Three days later, there was a march there in support of the Republic in which it is thought that as many as 100,000 people took part. This, then, was the situation awaiting the British.[10]

26th Indian Division, the formation entrusted with the occupation of Sumatra, was in Bangalore in India at the time of the Japanese surrender. It had fought with distinction in the Arakan and had taken Rangoon from the sea. In the late summer of 1945, it was preparing for a resumption of fighting against the Japanese in Malaya, but the Japanese surrendered on 14 August.[11] A convoy set out from Madras for Sumatra on 4 October. The timing of the move was broadly in accordance with the planning, mentioned earlier, undertaken in mid-September. The convoy carried Headquarters 26th Indian Division and its Commander, Major-General Chambers, the Naval Force Commander, Captain Sayer, Headquarters 71st Indian Infantry Brigade and its Commander, Brigadier Hutchinson, Royal Artillery Headquarters and its Commander, Brigadier Kelly, 1st Lincolns and 6th South Wales Borderers – the only two British Army formations in the Division – 1/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles and other ancillary and administrative troops. At sea, the convoy split: Naval

Headquarters, 26th Indian Division Headquarters, 71st Indian Infantry Brigade Headquarters, the Lincolns and the Garhwalis made for Padang; Royal Artillery Headquarters and the South Wales Borderers made for Medan.[12] At the end of October and the beginning of November, four more Indian Army battalions belonging to the Division arrived to serve in the Medan area. These were 6/6th Rajputana Rifles, 2/7th Rajputs, 8/8th Punjab and 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles.[13] On arrival, 8/8th Punjab moved across Sumatra by road convoy to reinforce the Padang area.[14] A formation was also despatched to Palembang. This was the last area where troops were deployed because, as described earlier, it was the most difficult area to get to. 1st Burma Regiment, which was not a part of 26th Indian Division but formed part of 9th Indian Infantry Brigade of 5th Indian Division, arrived in the town by air on 25 October.[15] In all, the British-Indian occupation force on Sumatra numbered approximately 15,000 men.

The British had decided, before deploying in Sumatra, that they would confine themselves to occupation of the key areas. This was largely dictated by political developments in Indonesia since the Japanese surrender. A directive issued by Headquarters Allied Land Forces South East Asia to General Chambers, the Commander Allied Land Forces Sumatra, set out the new policy: 'Full authority over Military and Civilians is to be exercised only in the Key areas, and even in these areas Civilians will be dealt with through the Dutch Civil Administration.' Beyond the key areas, 'full responsibility' was to rest with the Dutch, who could nevertheless appeal to the British for 'military assistance'. Such assistance was not to be given without reference to Headquarters Allied Land Forces South East Asia unless 'urgently needed on grounds of humanity'. The need for neutrality was stressed: 'Everything possible, consistent with carrying out your objects, will be done to avoid clashes with the local population and to refrain from intervening in political matters.'[16]

All three areas chosen by the British for occupation were found to be in a state of political excitement. The red and white Indonesian flag was everywhere. The Republican administration was in evidence, though it did not seem to the British that it was undertaking much administration. Numerous political parties had come into being. At first, the Indonesian population appeared indifferent to the British presence. They turned hostile once it became known that the British had brought with them Dutchmen belonging to the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Organisation. This organization was supposed to administer the British occupied enclaves and pave the way for a resumption of Dutch control. When posters were put up announcing that NICA would issue currency to replace that which the Japanese had issued, they were torn down. As the British put it: 'Very early in the occupation period the word "NICA" became a household expression and was used in propaganda etc. to denote the "enemies" of Indonesian freedom.' Crime had increased owing to the lack of 'efficient police services' during the interregnum between the Japanese surrender and the arrival of the British. In Padang, kidnappings, murders and arson led the British to concentrate the town's population of Allied prisoners of war and internees so that they could be more easily protected.

Palembang was restless and there were 'spasmodic attacks' on individuals, in particular the Chinese. In Medan, British and Indian patrols were sniped at, but there were no serious clashes either here or at Palembang for many months.[17]

Soon after his arrival, Brigadier Kelly, the Commander of British forces in the Medan area, met Indonesian leaders. He wished to come to an agreement on the question of arms. Hassan assured him of his desire to co-operate. He stated that he was 'all for peace and against terrorism' which he claimed was organized by the Ambonese troops of the KNIL and NICA. Kelly replied that he was 'not interested in politics except insofar as it affected law and order' and that, 'as citizens and influential ones at that', the local leaders had to give him 'their full co-operation'. He said that many Indonesian civilians were armed but that, if their weapons were handed in immediately, no-one would be punished. Hassan agreed to order the handing in of arms provided the British disarmed the Ambonese. Kelly's reply to this was that he would take away arms from everyone not authorized by him to carry them.[18] Disarmament was to be carried out in Padang and Palembang. At Padang, on 28 October, all firearms were given up by the Indonesian police to be kept under guard by British troops with the exception of a carbine for each police station. At Palembang, the police were disarmed in early November without incident although posters declaring it an offence for civilians to bear arms and requesting that they be surrendered were torn down.[19]

As far as British relations with the Indonesian population were concerned, in the earliest stages of the occupation, the recollections of British officers reveal that they varied from one area to another. Contemporary official reports do not deal with this subject. Captain Elliott, an officer who served with 1/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles in the Padang area, recalls that relations were initially friendly although it was possible to discern a brewing up of tension.[20] Captain Bramwell, who served with 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles in the Medan area, states that there was a distance between Indonesians and British and Indian troops:

> Prior to our arrival we had heard that there had been some unrest among the natives of Java but, for the first few weeks, the Sumatrans gave no trouble. Nor did they seek or welcome any contacts with us, not even with our Muslim soldiers. On meeting them in the town they would step off the pavements, avert their eyes and walk rapidly past us. Deferring to Europeans in this way seemed to be a custom instilled in them by the Dutch … but it gave one an uncomfortable feeling. In the countryside people would melt away but there was a sense of being watched all the time.[21]

The deterioration of Anglo–Indonesian relations

Anglo–Indonesian relations in Padang took a turn for the worst in early November 1945. Local Indonesians might have drawn inspiration from the resistance to the British in Surabaya which had been offered in late October. Alternatively, the rise

in violence may have been indicative of a growing mistrust of British aims. Attempts were made to kill Dutch civilians who, in spite of British orders to the contrary, had gone beyond the British-protected area. There were also efforts to break into the area of the town in which the internees were accommodated. The British feared that Indonesians intended to kidnap and then murder the children. British troops managed to prevent such incidents. Chinese living outside the protected area were kidnapped as they were deemed to be pro-Dutch.[22]

A particularly savage episode occurred at the end of the month. In the early hours of 26 November, a report was received from a Dutch former internee that Indonesians were trying to break into his house. Two non-commissioned officers belonging to 1st Lincolns, Sergeant Wainwright and Lance-Corporal Gell, went to investigate. When they got to the house, the two parted company and went to the rear to investigate on their own with torches. A few minutes later, they staggered onto the road. Both were in a bad way, having been attacked with 'sharp instruments'. Lance-Corporal Gell had suffered a severe head wound and Sergeant Wright had suffered a serious face wound: the side of his face had been slashed open. The attackers were not caught. This was not the only incident. A patrol of B Company of the Lincolns ordered an Indonesian to halt. The man failed to do so and was chased by the patrol. When the patrol caught up with him, he tried to attack its leader with a heavy piece of wood with a nail in it. He was arrested and sent to prison. The effect of these two incidents was to force the Commanding Officer of the battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Rossier, to issue uncompromising directives. He stated: 'In future, during the hours of curfew, any local who, acting in a suspicious manner fails to halt on being challenged by a sentry or patrols or who runs away on being approached, will be shot.' His directions concerning Indonesians evading arrest or offering resistance were similarly draconian: 'Any local who at any time, attempts to evade arrest or fights the escort may have maximum force used against him, soldiers will not hesitate to shoot or use the bayonet.' He also set out what was to be done should another 'murderous attack' occur: 'Any local who attempts a similar attack against any rank of this Unit will be bayonetted or shot out of hand; this applies by day and night.'[23]

But further violent incidents did follow, bringing greater Anglo–Indonesian animosity and resulting in savage reprisals by the British. On the morning of 4 December, it was reported that the Brigade Major of 71st Indian Infantry Brigade and a woman Red Cross worker had failed to return from a trip to the beach at Emmahaven, the port of Padang. According to Brian Aldiss, the pair had in fact gone to swim naked by the light of their jeep in a pool surrounded by jungle.[24] The following day, three platoons of the Lincolns carried out a search for the missing pair.[25] On this day also, Major Bowyer, the Commander of 'A' Company of 1/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles went from the battalion lines to an outlying location to investigate a report of shots being fired. On returning, an assailant fired one round at close range, wounding him in both arms. The other occupants of the jeep in which Bowyer was travelling returned fire but the man got away. Bowyer was taken to hospital. The following day, a platoon of 'A' Company was ordered to

burn the village from where the shots had come as a reprisal. 'This enjoyable task was begun at 1430 hrs, and with the exception of two houses standing rather separate from the village the whole was razed to the ground.'[26] This action, and those of the days to come, were part of a policy approved at Brigade level. The War Diaries of 71st Indian Infantry Brigade record for 6 December: 'Comd PADANG AREA [Brigadier Hutchinson] holds conference with unit comds regarding necessity for "gloves off" from now on. Still no news of missing persons.'[27] On 7 December, another village was raided by the Lincolns. A number of Japanese grenades and bombs were found in a house. Consequently, the owner of the house was 'publicly shot'. Another Indonesian was 'shot trying to escape' and 12 suspects and a 'headman' were brought back to Padang jail.[28] The same day, the British set about silencing sections of the Indonesian press which were adopting an anti-British tone: 'Comd PADANG AREA sends for Editor and assistant editor "OETOESAN SOEMATERA" re anti British articles. Editor (Mr. BARIOEN) sent to jail. Paper effectively suppressed.'[29]

It was on 8 December that the British discovered what had happened to the missing Brigade Major and the woman Red Cross worker. 'B' Company of the Lincolns found and exhumed their bodies, buried in shallow graves near the Juliana swimming pool south of Emmahaven. They had been stabbed to death. 'Two Indonesians involved in affair shot immediately and two more trying to escape also shot. Whole of the village in the area burned to the ground.'[30] Brigadier Hutchinson summoned the Indonesian Resident of Padang, Dr Djamil, and two other local Indonesian figures, Rasjid and Soeleiman Effendi, to his Headquarters and himself took them to view the bodies of the murder victims. He gave them the names of the killers and ordered them to be produced.[31] The same day, a company of 1/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles burnt a house which had been displaying slogans urging Indian troops not to fight Indonesians.[32]

The funeral of the Brigade Major and the Red Cross worker was held on 9 December. Indonesians were informed by means of posters distributed by British troops that there was to be a curfew between 9 am and 1 pm. The two were given full military honours and the funeral was attended by General Chambers, Brigadier Hutchinson, high ranking Japanese officers, local Indonesian leaders and representatives of the Chinese community. That same day, the body of a missing British sailor was discovered in Emmahaven. The body was naked with hands and feet tied and the stomach had been knifed. Two Indonesians found on the scene were 'shot trying to escape'.[33]

On 11 December, a further directive was issued by Brigadier Hutchinson relating to the possession of weapons: 'With immediate effect the possession of any weapons, including spears, swords, daggers or knives other than domestic utensils is an offence. All such weapons will be burned or otherwise destroyed forthwith.' Death and destruction were threatened against anyone contravening this directive: 'Hereafter, if any weapon whatsoever is found by the Civil Police or military, the owner is liable to be shot and his house destroyed.'[34] This was no idle threat. The following day the Lincolns raided two houses which it was suspected were the

Headquarters of a group of Indonesian extremists. Four Indonesians were caught with grenades and ammunition. They were immediately shot and the two houses were burnt.[35]

Unlike Padang, it was not until the early months of 1946 that there was a serious downturn in Anglo–Indonesian relations in Medan and Palembang. The increasing violence in the Medan area was related to the even more violent events which were taking place to the north, in the East Coast Residencies of Aceh, referred to below, where radical Indonesian forces were overthrowing and in many cases murdering the Sultans of the East Coast Residencies, deemed to be pro-Dutch and therefore an obstacle to Indonesian independence.

In the Medan area, on 9 March 1946, a reconnaissance patrol of 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles was ambushed just outside Tandjoengmorawa. A Major and two Indian other ranks were killed and a Captain and three Indian other ranks were wounded.[36] This incident is remembered clearly by Captain Bramwell. To him, it marked a turning point: 'The treacherous manner of their death and the gruesome mutilations inflicted on their bodies set the future pattern of our dealing with them [Indonesian fighters]. They simply became the enemy and we had a guerrilla war on our hands.' For Bramwell, guerrilla warfare was novel and disconcerting:

> This was a type of war that quite a few of our men from the NWFP [North West Frontier Province of India] well appreciated almost from childhood but, for many of us, it was a disturbing experience. The Japanese had always been in uniform and stood their ground but these people would open fire, melt into the jungle and merge with the general population. Our training soon told, however, and we were able to respond in an effective and disciplined way.
>
> As the Indonesian terrorists threatened both the Chinese traders and the Dutch colonists it became necessary to withdraw outlying members of these communities within the town boundary. In addition a defensive cordon was set up around Medan by fortifying schools and other large buildings and maintaining intensive patrolling within and outside the perimeter.[37]

Indonesian hostility was generated when the British carried out a raid on the Headquarters of the Tentara Republik Indonesia, the official army of the Indonesian Republic, in Medan. This operation, codenamed 'Snapdragon', was carried out because the British believed the TRI was attempting the 'subversion' of Indian other ranks, that is, inducing them to desert.[38] The raid, carried out on 18 March, was a success in that large quantities of arms and ammunition were seized and 16 members of the TRI arrested. In the opinion of the British, the raid 'clearly disorganized the functions of the local TRI.' It also prompted a vigorous reaction on the part of 'the leaders of Indonesian revolutionary organizations'. Ultimatums, printed in English and Malay, were distributed by hand in Medan during the late afternoon of 19 March. 'Immediate cessation of British military activities' and

'immediate release of all members of the TRI.' were demanded before sunset that day. If these demands were not met, it was stated, all 'British military establishments' would be destroyed and all Dutch people 'found within the area of MEDAN town' would be taken into 'custody'. Disturbances did occur that night, with Indonesians opening fire on British forces in the area of the railway station with automatic weapons; a British other rank and an Indian other rank were wounded. There were further disturbances during the two following nights but these were, according to the British, 'on a rather reduced scale' owing to 'very heavy rainfall at night'. Large concentrations of Indonesian extremists were reported outside Medan but nothing came of this.[39] There was an instance of press censorship on 27 March, when the British raided the printing press of the *Pewarta Deli*, a Republican newspaper which they believed had produced the ultimatum of the previous week. The printing press was immobilized and the manager and assistant manager were 'detained for further interrogation'. Such action on the part of the British caused the other Republican newspapers in Medan to be 'even more scathing than usual' in their leading articles: 'The propaganda theme of the freedom of the press has been taken up vigorously, the British are accused of trampling on the principles of democracy, and threatening the sovereignty of the people.'[40]

In the case of Palembang, the downturn in relations was marked, as in Padang and Medan, by a series of incidents. On the night of 25 February 1946, three naval officers were ambushed while returning from a search for a missing Chinese servant. Two were killed and the other was wounded. The Indonesians responsible, 'Raden Mangoen' and 'Malik', were arrested by the Japanese a month later and were handed over for trial. They were shot by a British sentry while 'trying to escape' – a recurrent theme in this chapter. Because of the general increase in tension, 71st Indian Infantry Brigade Headquarters and 1st Lincolns were moved there from Padang, arriving on 15 March. On their arrival, the garrison was reorganized: 1st Burma Regiment was posted to protect the area where the internees were concentrated and 1st Lincolns were established in the fort, with the exception of a company which was sent to guard the airfield.[41] Local people were apparently 'suspicious and nervous' at the arrival of the Lincolns. Indonesian fighters reacted by sniping at convoys running between the airfield and the town. On 30 March, they ambushed a patrol of Lincolns, consisting of an officer and 15 other ranks, which had gone to investigate shooting at a water truck in the eastern part of the town. The patrol was subjected to heavy fire from machine-guns and rifles. Many of the machine-guns were located in a fortified Mosque. A British account of this episode implies that the patrol would not take action against this position because it was a place of worship: 'Own troops refrained from offensive action against the mosque and thereby suffered casualties.' The patrol was charged by two parties of Indonesians armed with rifles, even spears and swords. It was eventually extricated by a company of Lincolns who cleared the area with mortars. British casualties in the engagement were two other ranks killed and one officer and 10 other ranks wounded; Indonesian casualties were estimated at 27 known killed, 50 either killed or wounded and 35 wounded.[42]

On 1 April, one of the British other ranks killed in the fighting, Private Purple, was recovered from the river by the Japanese. The body was naked, with hands and feet tied, and, in addition to bullet wounds, it had been 'severely mutilated' with spears. That afternoon, Private Purple was buried with full military honours.[43] The grave of a second British other rank, killed in the same incident and who had been buried in the Dutch cemetery, was 'subsequently desecrated, and the funeral tributes destroyed'. The Commander Allied Land Forces Sumatra, Major-General Hedley, Chambers' successor, was incensed by such desecration. At a meeting with Hassan, he protested about 'acts only committed by those who have reverted to the mentality of savages' and stressed that such 'excesses and illegal acts committed in the name of Freedom suffice only to alienate the sympathy which the civilized peoples of the world have hitherto shown towards Indonesian national aspirations'.[44]

Such violent incidents had their counterparts on Java. As on Java, armed encounters with bands of Indonesian fighters did little to predispose British commanders on the ground in favour of Indonesian independence. It has been noted in Chapter 3 that the British took a firm stand in Java on the celebration of the first anniversary of the declaration of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1946. The same was true on Sumatra. On 12 August, Major-General Hedley issued an Operational Instruction to his subordinate commanders outlining British policy on 'Independence Day': 'Representations have been received from INDONS for permission to hold processions, including large numbers of women and children, within the Allied occupied area on "INDEPENDENCE DAY" 17 Aug 46 … HASSAN has been told by this HQ that no such celebrations are permitted within the Allied occupied areas.' Hedley ordered his subordinate commanders to 'prevent any parades, processions or demonstrations taking place within Allied occupied areas on 17 Aug' by 'active patrolling'. Commanders were to inform local Indonesian leaders that processions were to avoid British-occupied areas. Neither officers nor Allied troops were to take part in 'any social, formal or informal, celebrations planned in connection with "Independence Day"' but the flying of flags or 'other "Indonesian Republic" emblems' was not to be 'a cause for the use of force'. If a 'grave emergency' arose, British commanders were authorized to use 'tear smoke grenades'. In the event of 'disturbances', only British or Indian troops should be employed to 'restore order'. Japanese Surrendered Personnel were not to be used to 'quell disturbances' and could only act in 'self-defence'. As to how order was to be restored, he said: 'This will be done on the same lines as communal disturbances are dealt with in India bearing in mind that there will be women and children present. The minimum of force will be employed to prevent or disperse processions etc. Firing will be resorted to as a last resort.'[45]

In the event, just as on Java, the anniversary of the declaration of Indonesian independence passed off peacefully in the British-occupied enclaves. There were no celebrations at all: 'Although no restrictions had been placed on the flying of the red and white flags, only four were seen in MEDAN: one each on the "Mayor's" office and house, and two on the tender of an engine in the railway station.' The

muted state of affairs there was, however, in stark contrast to the situation in the rest of Sumatra: 'Tac R [tactical reconnaissance] sorties were flown over the main towns in the EAST Coast residency, each resplendent with Indonesian flags and colours. The roads were generally deserted but in the towns meetings were being held at which the average attendance was 500.'[46]

The British curtailment of celebrations of the first anniversary of independence contrasted with their attitude to the celebration of the birthday of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. This must have been evident to Indonesians. 'On Saturday 31 Aug the birthday of HM Queen WILHELMINA of the Netherlands was celebrated in MEDAN, PADANG and PALEMBANG with parades of DUTCH and BRITISH troops.'[47] The British authorities on Sumatra were evidently indifferent to the feelings of nationalist Indonesians and felt that they had the situation under control, perhaps in the light of their successful management of Independence Day. This difference in attitude to the two events is clear evidence that senior British commanders, at least, identified more closely with the Dutch than with the nationalist movement of the country they were occupying.

Anglo–Indonesian co-operation

Although, as has been mentioned above, Anglo–Indonesian relations were often violent and brutal, there is also much evidence to suggest that British commanders on the ground in Sumatra recognized the 'de facto' authority of the Indonesian Republican administration that had been set up and sought, where possible, to work through Indonesian leaders to achieve some of their tasks and establish harmony. In this respect, a parallel can be drawn with the pragmatic policy on Java, outlined in Chapter 3. A 26th Indian Division Operational Instruction issued to the Commander of 1st Burma Regiment on 4 December 1945 provides a good example of the approach the British adopted in their dealings with Indonesian leaders. 1st Burma Regiment had been flown into Palembang at the end of October. This Instruction drew attention to the growing anti-British feeling throughout Sumatra on the part of 'large numbers of the INDONESIAN population' on account of 'events in JAVA'. It then said: 'You will NOT interfere in local politics nor will you officially recognise the so-called INDONESIAN Republic. You must however, in present circumstances, deal direct with prominent local INDONESIANS in the interests of maintaining law and order.'[48]

On 26 December 1945, at Medan, there was a meeting between General Chambers, Commander Allied Land Forces Sumatra, Brigadier Forman, Commander of 4th Indian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Kelly, Commander of the Medan area, Hassan and Mohammed Youssouf. Youssouf was by profession a lawyer and had studied at Leiden University in the Netherlands. He had been briefly detained by the Dutch in 1930. By 1945, he was a leading nationalist in Medan, where he had lived since his release.[49] A British report said that the meeting 'was held in an atmosphere of cordiality'. It was agreed that the Indonesian Republican police force in the town would be issued by the British with 50 rifles,

20 pistols and cloth to make 'proper uniforms' so that they could be identified by British forces. The cloth was provided on condition that supplies and civilian labour would be made available to the British. It was also agreed that the TKR, the Indonesian Republican Army, would be permitted to bear the arms that they already possessed outside the areas under British control but would not be recognized inside either the British areas or areas under Japanese control. Their presence was 'not required to help in [maintaining] law and order'. On Sumatra, the TKR, along with the Indonesian Navy, stood at 'approx 35,000 all ranks', according to British estimates. Like its counterpart on Java, this Army was made up of Indonesians formed by the Japanese into various paramilitary organizations and trained by them.[50] Another point agreed was that the Indonesian Republican authorities would be permitted to try 'certain minor Indonesian prisoners' who were at that time held by the British on the condition that an Allied representative would be in the court 'should the Allied authorities so desire'. This rider was presumably a result of Allied fears that the Indonesian authorities might embark on 'show trials' of 'political suspects' rather than the prosecution of genuine criminals. Hassan and Youssouf also agreed to 'establish effective control over the local press'.

In the immediate aftermath of this meeting, at least, the British deemed it had been successful: 'HASSAN has fulfilled his promises to assist in maintaining law and order in MEDAN, and arson, murder and kidnapping are now once again the exception rather than the rule.'[51] In mid-February, it was stated in a British report that the situation in Medan *vis-à-vis* British co-operation with the Indonesian Republican police was 'satisfactory'. The report went on: 'The Civil Police have started co-operating on a much wider basis, and have been taking a firmer attitude towards the various looting and kidnapping gangs.'[52]

In early February 1946, there was a further Anglo–Indonesian conference on the subject of the Indonesian Republican Army, now renamed the TRI, between Hedley and Hassan. At this meeting, it was confirmed that TRI troops would not be recognized within British-occupied areas and would not be permitted to carry arms there. Outside those areas, Indonesian leaders could organize armed formations of the TRI so long as they notified Headquarters Allied Forces Sumatra of their locations and strengths. The TRI were to wear 'a recognizable uniform' of which the British had to be given 'descriptive details'. Furthermore, TRI personnel had to carry passes authorizing them to be in possession of a firearm. The TRI could pass through British-occupied areas provided that the local British commander was forewarned and that they were given an escort. Finally, it was agreed that if formations of the TRI encountered British troops 'temporarily operating outside the Allied Area', then it was 'the responsibility of the local TRI leader to come forward and identify his men and give information on their tasks, strengths and location'.[53]

This level of agreement is probably not surprising. There is evidence that Indonesian leaders at times identified more closely with the British than with 'extremist' compatriots. Occasionally, Indonesian leaders looked to British commanders to provide a stable environment in which they could consolidate

their authority. In Medan, as has been seen, there was an increase in 'extremist' violence during March 1946. During the night of 14 March, Dr Amir's house was attacked by 'five extremist youths'. The attack was repulsed by Amir's personal bodyguard of 'civilian police'. That same night, the Indonesian Chief of Police for Medan was kidnapped, presumably by Indonesian extremists, but subsequently released 'on AMIR's orders'. Such events evidently unsettled Amir, who communicated his anxieties to Major-General Hedley. He told him that he expected 'trouble' in Medan from 'extremists' and that he 'hoped for Allied co-operation in quelling any disturbances that arose.' He said that he was unable to control the 'extremist elements' in and around Medan and that 'two bands of irresponsible youths' were coming towards Medan from Siantar and Brastagi 'with the intention of committing hostile acts against Allied Troops'. Amir then pleaded with Hedley in a tone almost of desperation: 'He, AMIR, was unable to deal with them, as they were past reasoning with, and he requested the GOC to deal with them severely, stating that if only Allied troops would teach them a lesson, his position would become much more secure.'[54]

In early April 1946, there was an opportunity for Anglo–Indonesian co-operation at an even higher level when there was a visit by Sjarifoedin, the Indonesian Minister of Defence in the Sjahrir cabinet. General Hedley had a meeting with him on 10 April. The British minutes reveal that Hedley was anxious to work through Sjarifoedin in order to improve the British position in Sumatra. He stated that he needed a strong Indonesian leader on the island with whom he could 'do business'. Sjarifoedin did not suggest anyone but did say that he had not been impressed by the Indonesian civil administration and 'hinted at a possible purge'. Next, Hedley pointed out that he had proof that the TRI was conducting a campaign to induce Indian other ranks to desert. He said that he had 'no intention of interfering with the legitimate activities of the TRI outside MEDAN' but that he 'would not tolerate any subversive activities or hostile actions' against Indian troops in Medan itself. 'SJARIFOEDIN agreed that the TRI leaders were too young and irresponsible, and stated that he hoped to send some responsible person from JAVA to control and organize the TRI.' For his own part, Sjarifoedin made a number of promises. He said that he 'hoped to send a representative from JAVA who would assume responsibility for the organization of the press in SUMATRA' which, as has already been noted, often assumed an anti-British tone. Sjarifoedin also stated that, in agreement with the British and Dutch authorities, he intended to divide his supporters, whom he had brought from Java, between the three areas under Allied control, to promote 'better relationships' between the Indonesian leaders and the Allied authorities and to give advice to the Indonesian Residents in the administration of their respective areas.[55] This exchange suggests that Sjarifoedin's prime concern was to establish the Java-based Republic's hold over Sumatra and that it suited him to co-operate with the British.

There was also a certain amount of Anglo–Indonesian co-operation to rehabilitate Sumatra's oil industry. On 15 July, the Commander of 71st Indian Infantry Brigade in Palembang, Brigadier Hutchinson, arranged with

Dr A. K. Gani, the local Indonesian leader, 'for a meeting to be held in the near future between Indonesian labour leaders and representatives of the DUTCH Oil company to discuss payment of labour at the refineries'. Gani was one of the most prominent nationalist leaders on Sumatra. The head of the PNI, the Indonesian National Party, on Sumatra, he was thought by the British to be vying for influence with Hassan. It was even thought that his ambitions extended to the sphere of the political scene on Java.[56] The Summary went on: 'GANI continues to show his keenness to co-operate with ALF, and has presented 71 Ind Inf Bde with a tiger cub as a mascot.'[57] All Indian Divisions had a Divisional emblem: 23rd Indian Division was represented by a fighting cock; 5th Indian Division by a moon; and 26th Indian Division by a tiger. It is possible that Gani wanted to use the British. In this respect, he was no different from Sjarifoedin. Further co-operation over oil occurred in early September 1946: 'Representatives of AMERICAN Oil interests have approached HASSAN at SIANTAR with a view to inspecting oil installations in the PAKAN BAROE-SIAK area. HASSAN has agreed to arrange a safe conduct for an inspection party which will travel from PADANG by road to PAKAN BAROE.' At the same time, a meeting was held in South Sumatra: 'A further successful meeting between Comd 71 Ind Inf Bde, and AMERICAN, DUTCH and INDONESIAN Oil representatives was held on 7 Sep. It was agreed that work in the refineries could start on 1 Oct. Work will at first be limited to repair and rehabilitation of the plant.'[58] It can therefore be seen that, on Sumatra as on Java, the British were compelled to recognize the reality of Republican authority and negotiate with Indonesian leaders to accomplish a range of tasks.

The British and the Social Revolution in Northern Sumatra

Arguably the most notable event in the immediate post-war period, specific to Sumatra, was the social revolution in the north of the country which ended the rule of the Sultans in the East Coast Residencies. These rulers had been in place before the establishment of Dutch power in the region during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Dutch military conquest of Aceh lasted for approximately 40 years, ending only in 1913.[59] Thereafter, the Dutch found it convenient to work through the Sultans to administer the territory. In the words of Governor Goedhart, writing in 1927: 'Without them we will achieve nothing in Aceh in the long run.'[60] The Sultans had remained in power during the Japanese occupation. After the Japanese surrender, they found themselves in a precarious position. Known for their traditional outlook and pro-Dutch views they now found themselves in the middle of a revolution. With the British confined to Medan and its immediate environs and with no prospect of a widespread restoration of Dutch authority for some time, the Sultans were at the mercy of the many radical groups which made up the Indonesian revolutionary movement. These saw them as an obstacle to the attainment of full independence.

Violence against the Sultans erupted in March 1946. It had been planned by the Sumatran branch of the Persatuan Perdjuangan, or Struggle Union, an organization of radical nationalist, communist and socialist parties, founded by Tan Malaka on Java after the Japanese surrender. Much of the violence was carried out by Islamic youth groups. Many Sultans, along with their families and supporters, were killed and their palaces ransacked. It is important to note that the violence was also directed against Republican officials put in place by Governor Hassan. They were deemed by the revolutionaries to be insufficiently radical. In the opinion of Anthony Reid, the revolutionary violence 'destroyed what remained of Republican government in East Sumatra'.[61] This destruction, as will shortly be seen, was temporary. The British in Medan and indeed throughout the whole of Sumatra were aware of events and of their significance but were not directly affected. The action was taking place well beyond the area they occupied.

They did nevertheless intervene to protect the Sultan of Deli, whose palace was close to Medan. The Sultan had succeeded to the throne on the death of his father in 1945. He had been partly educated in Switzerland, 'enjoyed racehorses, and visited Europe as often as possible'.[62] It appears from a British report that the Sultan appealed to the British for protection once the violence had started: 'The Sultan of DELI is now the only Sultan who has not been arrested by the Indonesians; at his request his palace is now guarded by own tps.'[63] Whether these troops were British or Indian is not specified. As Reid has pointed out, British protection enabled the Sultan to defy the forces directed against him.[64]

The violence of the social revolution appalled conservative-minded Republican leaders on Sumatra and Java. After the attacks on the Sultans, the force of the revolution was spent and it lost direction. Moderate Republican leaders stepped into the breech and public opinion supported them. A moderate Republican administration was restored in the area but the old structure of society in the region had gone forever.

A letter from Baron C. G. W. H. van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, to Sir Neville Bland, the British Ambassador at The Hague, dated 16 January 1947, expressed gratitude for the role played by the British. He recounted how so many of the Sultans had fallen victim to the 'actions of extremists' in March 1946 and how the Sultan of Deli 'would undoubtedly have shared their fate, were it not for the fact that the Commanding Officer of the British Army of Occupation at Medan afforded protection to the palace of the Sultan, although it was located outside the protected area'. The letter ended: 'His Highness feels that he is greatly indebted to the British Government, and has requested me to convey to Your Excellency his feelings of profound gratitude, hoping that Your Excellency will communicate the expression thereof to Your Government.'[65] The Sultan was living in The Netherlands at the time the letter was written. He appealed to Queen Juliana for the restoration of his rights but there was to be no place for the Sultans in the federal state of East Sumatra which the Dutch were then creating. The Sultan of Deli returned to Sumatra and died in 1969.[66]

The deployment of the Japanese

At the time of the Japanese surrender, Japanese forces on Sumatra consisted of 25th Army, commanded by Lieutenant-General Tanabe. His headquarters were at Fort de Kock in the mountains, roughly 50 miles north of Padang. 2nd Imperial Guards Division was in the north, disposed mainly along the coast in the Medan area. 25th Independent Mixed Brigade was on the west coast north of Padang; 9th Air Division was in the south at Palembang. The total strength of the Japanese on Sumatra was 71,352. This figure included ancillary troops and technicians in the ports and oilfields.[67] The number of Japanese troops on Sumatra was therefore the same as that on Java, where the Japanese 16th Army was situated. The reason why so many Japanese were based there was that that was where an Allied attack had been first expected. The Japanese had to be prepared for such a threat. Such an attack had indeed been envisaged by South East Asia Command.[68] Since no attack materialized, Japanese troops on Sumatra saw no action. In the post-surrender period, with peacetime tasks to be undertaken, the fact that there were so many Japanese troops on such an underpopulated island came to be of great significance. Whereas on Java the Japanese detachments were frequently overwhelmed and disarmed by Indonesian forces, on Sumatra they retained their weapons and stayed away from conflict which, as has already been mentioned, was in any case on a much smaller scale. Consequently they were able to help the British in a number of ways.

To begin with, the Japanese were of great assistance in gathering in prisoners of war and internees from outlying areas and bringing them into the safety of the Allied occupied zones. Whereas on Java the process of rescuing prisoners of war and internees was going on into the middle of 1946 with assistance from the Indonesian Republican authorities, on Sumatra all prisoners of war and internees had been gathered in by the Japanese, with some help from 26th Indian Division, by November 1945. This was a notable feat on the part of the Japanese in that many of the camps were located in the interior of Sumatra hundreds of miles from the key areas.[69]

Another area in which the Japanese were of assistance was the guarding of oil fields. Japanese tasks in this respect were set forth in a message marked ‘Secret and Personal’ from Major-General Chambers to Lieutenant-General Tanabe dated 5 December 1945. Concerning the disposition of Japanese forces in Central Sumatra, Chambers instructed: ‘Your dispositions in Central SUMATRA will include protection of the Allied oil fields SOUTH of PAKANBAROE.’ Instructions concerning Japanese 9th Air Division in south Sumatra were that it was to concentrate in the Djambi-Palembang-Lahat area and assume responsibility ‘for maintaining law and order and the protection of all Allied oil production interests’.[70] An integral part of the Japanese mission in south Sumatra was the protection of the oil refineries outside Palembang. This was described in a Divisional Operational Instruction to the Commander of 1st Burma Regiment dated 4 December. 1st Burma Regiment was the only British–Indian formation in Palembang at this stage. The

wording of the instruction suggests that the British saw themselves as being in a weak position and consequently relied heavily on the Japanese: 'PALEMBANG Town and the surrounding area, including the PLADJOE Refinery, remains the responsibility of 9 AIR DIV for maintenance of law and order. Within that area your responsibility is limited to protecting, and maintaining law and order inside, any sub areas actually occupied by Allied Forces or RAPWI.'[71] A Divisional Weekly Intelligence Summary for February 1946 reveals that the Japanese in South Sumatra were being used to guard the oil fields at Djambi, Dawas and Limau.[72] Japanese forces continued to guard the oil refineries of Pladjoe and Soengei Gerong until they were withdrawn in July 1946 as part of the progressive, phased evacuation of Japanese forces from Sumatra. Their guard duties were taken over by 1st Lincolns and 1st Burma Regiment.[73]

As on Java, the British were faced with the bizarre prospect of having to work with their former enemies. A further parallel can be found in the degree of admiration the Japanese commanded from their former adversaries. Major Koder of 6/6th Rajputana Rifles recalls that a Japanese officer reported to him in his office at 9.00am every morning and asked him if he needed anything. He felt that he had nothing to complain of, that the situation was 'all very proper'.[74] The testimony of Captain Bramwell, the officer who served with 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles, confirms this impression. On the arrival of the British in Medan, he says, they found it convenient to employ them, pending the arrival of British reinforcements, on 'garrison duties'. Bramwell thought highly of the way in which they discharged their tasks: 'So far from being disarmed they were allowed to retain their basic infantry weapons and co-operate in maintaining law and order among the Sumatrans. In this task their fiercesome reputation were invaluable and they readily undertook any task allocated to them.'[75] Dan Raschen, a young Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers who served with 26th Indian Division on Sumatra, commanded the Mahratta Platoon of 28 Company, Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners. His impressions of the Japanese were also favourable. He recalls the withdrawal of a Japanese detachment to Padang:

> In May 1946 the Japanese Army on the west coast of Sumatra had been told it could go home. To complete the surrender of the vanquished, we, the victors, had to go through the motions of disarming them. I felt pretty proud that I should be selected to accept Japanese arms and dump them in the sea. Our job was to provide a couple of landing craft which would each take about forty tons of arms and ammunition out to sea off Padang, then drop them over the edge. The landing craft and I were waiting at the end of the Padang River beside Monkey Hill as the Japanese convoy arrived. I still remember how immensely impressed I was with it. Admittedly these Japanese had never themselves been engaged in battle and had been living as their own masters in parts of the county which we dared not penetrate, but their efficiency and discipline were eye openers. The fifty trucks, all old and all ex-British

> from Singapore, arrived from over a hundred miles away, exactly on time and without breakdowns.

The Japanese were set to work dumping ammunition in the sea. Raschen went on: 'Nobody gave an order and nobody chivvied anyone, yet every man knew what he had to do and kept on doing it. For years to come I could be heard pompously pronouncing that if one wanted to beat the world, try Japanese soldiers with British officers.'[76] A specific instance of the discipline which Japanese officers imposed on their troops evidently made a profound impression on Lieutenant Raschen when he was stationed in Palembang:

> Our Japanese were being withdrawn fast, yet their discipline never flagged. A British officer was occasionally expected to inspect the Japanese perimeter guard at the Palembang airfield at night…One such officer happened to find a sentry asleep and, as a matter of course, mentioned it to the Japanese OC for attention…The next orderly officer noted the earlier report and asked if the sentry who had been asleep had been dealt with. "Yes, sir," replied the Japanese OC, "I beheaded him." The Japanese officer's sword was not just an ornament.[77]

Set against British admiration for the Japanese was a certain degree of resentment, influenced by the knowledge of the way in which they had treated British prisoners during the war. Many of the battalions which comprised the British occupation force on Sumatra came from regiments other battalions of which had been caught up in the mass surrender at Singapore in 1942. Captain Bramwell of 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles recalls: 'a drawback to normal relations was the filtering, through the Regimental grapevine, of stories of the despicable treatment of our own 1st. Bn. comrades taken prisoner in Singapore in 1942. Anger was felt by all ranks when they heard of their fate.'[78]

Linked to this was the need for the British to deal with Japanese war criminals as part of the process which culminated in the Tokyo War Crimes Trials – a delicate task when the British were obliged to rely on Japanese goodwill for the performance of so many of their tasks. Nevertheless, the British set about their investigations early on in the occupation. By early January 1946, they had obtained records of the careers of all Kempeitai personnel in Sumatra from 'Japanese and other sources'. With only a few exceptions, all Kempeitai personnel had been photographed.[79] In all, there were 584 war criminals and 'suspected war criminals' who by November 1946 had been concentrated on Sabang Island off the northern tip of Sumatra.[80]

Throughout the course of the British occupation, the evacuation of Japanese personnel went ahead steadily in phases. Most were sent straight back to Japan but some went via Malaya. The more Japanese that were repatriated the less the British could use them. At first, those in the north were used as a protective screen to deter hostile Indonesians from attacking the British in Medan. As more and

more Japanese troops were withdrawn, this screen was drawn ever more tightly around the town. By the end of the British occupation, 68,402 Japanese personnel had been evacuated out of an original total of 71,352. 146 Japanese remained in Medan, along with 400 'dock labourers' at Belawan. In southern Sumatra, there were 643 Japanese technicians and labourers in the Pladjoe-Soengei-Gerong area. 584 war criminals and suspected war criminals were detained on the island of Sabang off the northern tip of Sumatra. During the course of the British occupation, 626 Japanese died and 551 either deserted or went missing.[81]

Anglo–Dutch relations and the British withdrawal from Sumatra

Far easier than the task of repatriating the Japanese was that of gathering in and protecting Allied prisoners of war and internees and, if necessary, repatriating them. There were far fewer of these on Sumatra than on Java: on Sumatra they numbered 13,551. Mention has already been made of the valuable role that the Japanese played in gathering all the prisoners of war and internees into the key areas by November 1945. During the British occupation, many of these had to await the return of Dutch control before they could resume their pre-war occupations. The plantations were out of bounds to them because of the British decision to limit their occupational duties. While many internees therefore chose to remain in Sumatra, many were returned to the Netherlands by the British: 6,958 were evacuated from Medan and 1,454 from Palembang. At one stage, the British decided to redistribute the internees. British fears of violence from Indonesian 'extremists' led the British to contemplate a withdrawal from Padang so that they might regroup in greater strength in Medan and Palembang. In such an eventuality, the internees would have to go with them. Most were sent to Medan, but some were also sent to Batavia.[82] In the event, the British retained Padang to hand over to the Dutch at the end of the occupation. That the British should have contemplated a withdrawal from Padang suggests that they felt overstretched militarily and were deeply fearful of the violent nature of the Indonesian revolution. In this respect, the situation was no different from Java, where regroupings of military formations and movement of internees were often contemplated. That the same fears should have exercised the British in the case of Sumatra hardly suggests, as Donnison claims, that it was a soft option.

It is generally believed that women and children imprisoned by the Japanese endured many hardships. Yet, to Major Koder, those on Sumatra seemed healthy; it was his opinion that 'they had not been all that badly treated by the Japanese'.[83] Nevertheless, it is clear that their mood was, for the most part, sombre. Captain Bramwell recalls: 'Their recent experiences had … left them in a state of depression and it was difficult for such a proud and independent folk to accept enforced idleness and inability to control their future. Even at that early date they obviously knew that their days in Indonesia were numbered.'[84] British social relations with

the internees were of the same varied nature as on Java: there was the natural friendliness that exists between Europeans thrown together, even intimacy, but there was also a degree of tension. As on Java, this was born of the belief on the part of the internees that the British were letting them down by treating with Republican officials as with members of a legitimate government and of wilder fears that they were trying to obtain Sumatra for themselves. Major Koder remembers being on a parade ground when the British national anthem was played: internees in houses surrounding the parade ground tried to drown it out by playing the Dutch national anthem on the piano.[85]

Socializing between Dutch internees and the British was confined to officers. There appear to have been fewer evening events, probably because there were fewer internees. Captain Bramwell found such events frustrating: 'In the evenings there might be occasional dances organised by Dutch ladies; pleasant occasions when our ambitions were always thwarted, (in my case anyway), by the duty mums with few illusions about foreign men.'[86] In this respect, the situation for other ranks was different from that on Java where, as has been seen in Chapter 4, other ranks of the Seaforth Highlanders enjoyed close relations with the Dutch civilian community that occasionally led to marriage. Other ranks belonging to 6th South Wales Borderers recall escorting British officers to the area in Medan where the internees were accommodated so that they could visit friends or girlfriends and picking them up afterwards but say that they themselves did not socialize with the Dutch.[87]

Another difference between Anglo–Dutch relations on Sumatra and those on Java was at the military level: whereas on Java British and Dutch troops had to work closely together for much of the occupation, on Sumatra Dutch troops arrived from Europe to relieve the British forces only at the end of the occupation. There was a much shorter period for antagonism to develop from British horror at Dutch violence towards the Indonesian population. Moreover, far fewer Dutch-colonial troops, a source of so much tension on Java, appear to have operated on Sumatra.

British experiences on Java led them to exercise caution in the case of those Dutch and Dutch-colonial forces which were located on Sumatra. On 22 October 1945, there was a meeting between Major-General Chambers and Lieutenant-Commander Brondgeest at which Chambers outlined his policy on Anglo–Dutch military co-operation. Brondgeest was a commander in Force 136. He had been dropped in the Medan area on 25 August 'on a mission concerned with RAPWI'. He had then been instructed to turn to intelligence work pending the arrival of British forces. At their meeting, Chambers told him that his policy concerning Dutch–Indonesian relations was to avoid friction and that for this reason he had decided to prohibit the 'further arming of any Dutch regular or irregular forces'. He went on: 'Ambonese forces in MEDAN and PADANG would remain in their present areas to carry out the functions allotted to them.' Aware of the hostility that many Indonesians felt towards the Dutch, General Chambers stated that 'it was not advisable for Dutch civilians or tps to make themselves conspicuous or

wander around in Sumatra. He had therefore signalled to AFNEI suggesting the removal of all Dutch Force 136 from Sumatra'.[88]

In December 1945, when the situation at Padang had taken a turn for the worse and in the aftermath of the tumultuous events on Java, the British attitude to a possible Dutch military role changed. A 26th Indian Division Operational Instruction issued to the Commander of 1st Burma Regiment in Palembang on 4 December indicates that, although the British were still wary of using the Dutch, the arming of Dutch former prisoners-of-war and civilians was not now being ruled out altogether: 'No further arms should be issued to DUTCH ex POWs but you should maintain an adequate reserve of DUTCH Arms and amn, under guard of your own tps, for issue in any grave emergency to DUTCH ex POWs or selected civilians.'[89]

By March 1946, the British attitude on the question of a Dutch military role in the occupation of Sumatra had changed further. This was unquestionably a result of the upsurge in violence in Medan and Palembang, mentioned earlier. Plans were now being made to raise Dutch units from among Dutch former prisoners of war who were 'medically fit'. These plans were discussed at a meeting at Divisional Headquarters on 17 March. Present were Lieutenant-General Stopford, Christison's successor as Commander Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies, Lieutenant-General Spoor, the Commander of the Royal Netherlands Indian Army, Major-General Hedley and Lieutenant-Colonel Pel, the senior Dutch Liaison Officer on Sumatra. It was planned that the 308 'medically fit' Dutch former prisoners of war would be formed into a rifle company as the basis of a 'Palembang battalion'. Lieutenant-Colonel Pel was put in overall charge of the training of Dutch troops on Sumatra but he was to be assisted by the British.[90] British troops assumed responsibility for training the newly raised Dutch formations.[91]

In August 1946, the British announced that the areas they held would be handed over to the Dutch.[92] Late that month, Dutch colonial forces in the Medan area were coming under attack from Indonesian 'extremists': 'On 20 Aug one coy of Dutch troops from 6 Bn RNIA was sniped on by Indonesians while training … The company was later attacked by armed Indonesians who were dispersed. The Dutch estimated that the attackers numbered about 100, and claimed that casualties inflicted were 15 confirmed.'[93] By early September, all Dutch forces on Sumatra were being administered by a Dutch Headquarters, although they continued to come under British command for operational purposes.[94] The same month, British commanders on Sumatra set about trying to arrange a ceasefire with local Indonesian leaders. As on Java, this was part of an attempt to create a better atmosphere in which political negotiations could take place between the Dutch Commission General, which had come from the Netherlands, and representatives of the Indonesian Republic. A ceasefire was also desirable as the British wanted to hand over the key areas to Dutch forces from Europe in a settled atmosphere. These forces were due to arrive during October, thus bringing to an end the British military commitment.[95]

On 10 September, the Commander of 4th Indian Infantry Brigade, who was deputizing for Major-General Hedley – at that time away 'on tour' – had a meeting with Hassan on the subject of a truce. Hassan welcomed such an idea and said that he could use the TRI to enforce it on 'more unruly elements'. His representatives were then attending the Java truce talks. On their return, he would be prepared to discuss 'detailed arrangements' for Sumatra. After the meeting, Hassan sent orders to the Indonesian Residents of the areas of the East Coast, covering the Medan area, the West Coast, covering the Padang area, and to the Resident in charge of the Palembang area. The Weekly Intelligence Summary noted: 'The INDONESIAN leaders are naturally most anxious to show how effective is their control and to date appear to have had some measure of success.'[96]

It soon became clear to the British that Indonesian 'extremists' were using the restriction of British military operations to strengthen their positions. On 19 September, a patrol of 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles discovered newly constructed Indonesian positions in the eastern sector of Medan near the British perimeter. The following day, a patrol of 6/6th Rajputana Rifles in the north east sector of Medan found similar defensive positions and came under 'heavy and continuous sniping'. The patrol was 'forced to retaliate', causing casualties to their Indonesian antagonists of 13 killed and four wounded. The Indonesian forces followed up the withdrawal of this patrol by approaching to within 200 yards of the British lines. 'Our troops showed remarkable restraint in withholding fire. During the sniping one BOR and one IOR were slightly wounded.' The Commander of 4th Indian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Mellsop, who has been mentioned in earlier chapters in the context of Java, informed the Acting Mayor of Medan that if the defensive positions which his patrols had encountered were still intact by 9.00am the next morning his forces would be sent to remove them.

At 9.00am the next morning small British patrols were sent out and discovered that, while some defensive positions had been demolished, others were still intact. Brigadier Mellsop had another meeting with the Acting Mayor. The Mayor was told that he had until 10.30am to warn all Indonesians in the area that the British would carry out a search operation and that, if they offered resistance, the British would retaliate. British forces were duly sent out and encountered 'heavy fire'. A full-scale battle soon started in which the British employed artillery and mortars. By early afternoon, they had reached the eastern edge of the kampong area and then began to withdraw 'under intermittent sniping'. British casualties during the operation had been one Viceroy's-commissioned officer killed and one officer and two Indian other ranks wounded. All that the British knew of Indonesian casualties was that one Indonesian had been killed and three had been wounded.

As a result of these breaches of the ceasefire, Major-General Hedley interviewed Dr Gani on 22 September. He mentioned the fact that certain Indonesians were taking advantage of decreased British patrolling to strengthen their defences in Medan. In reply, Gani said he hoped that the situation could be 'clarified' when the official truce talks, at which he would be present, commenced.[97] The situation in Medan continued to be strained. Brigadier Mellsop informed the Acting Mayor

that he would refrain from further military action until the night of 23–24 September in order that he, the Acting Mayor, might relay his instructions forbidding Indonesians from constructing defences and bearing arms. Between 22 and 25 September, the situation was calm but there were serious patrol clashes in the east sector of Medan on 26, 27 and 28 September involving British-Indian and Indonesian casualties. The Weekly Intelligence Summary noted that Indonesians were 'intensifying their preparations for stronger opposition'. The reason for this seemed clear: 'the INDONESIANS are anxious to speed their build up in view of the short time available before the entry of the DUTCH and the withdrawal of our own forces confronts them with the long talked of opportunity of a "show down with the real enemy".' Concerning the degree of control which the Acting Mayor of Medan exercised over local Indonesian forces, the Intelligence Summary noted that although he had 'probably attempted to comply' with British orders, his control was limited.

The situation was no better in Padang. There were 'sniping and grenade attacks' and British convoys on the road to the airfield were fired on. The British believed that hostile Indonesians were infiltrating into Padang itself. On 26 September, a British convoy on the road to the airfield was engaged by Indonesians armed with automatic weapons and grenades. One Indian other rank was killed and another wounded. The Indonesian fighters apparently fled when the British-Indian troops returned fire. There was a similar attack the next day. On both occasions, the British retaliated by using artillery to engage Indonesian 'targets in the area'.[98]

The attempted truce was therefore as difficult to enforce on Sumatra as it was on Java. Irregular Indonesian forces, never amenable to the control of local Indonesian leaders, were more suspicious than ever with the imminent arrival of Dutch troops.

In the Medan area, Dutch troops began to relieve British troops on 26 October 1946. The machine-gun battalion of the Frontier Force Rifles and 1st Indian Anti-Tank Regiment embarked for India, and Dutch troops accordingly took over responsibility for the defence of the west sector of the town, under the command of 4th Indian Infantry Brigade. These troops were the 6th Infantry Battalion, which had been raised in Medan, and the 3/3rd Battalion, which had come from the Netherlands. This arrival did not escape the notice of Indonesians, some of whom very soon became hostile. The night after the arrival of the Dutch troops was, according to the British, 'the noisiest we had had in MEDAN'. The west sector of Medan then quietened down until 31 October, when there were again heavy engagements between British and Dutch troops and Indonesians. Another reaction to the arrival of Dutch troops was that, for the first time, a convoy on the Medan–Belawan road was heavily engaged. After this, troops had to open up the road and convoys, as in Java, had to be escorted.[99] A truce was arranged between British and Indonesians which became effective on 6 November. This arrangement was then strengthened when, on 8 November, detailed truce orders for the whole of British-occupied Indonesia were issued from Batavia. These had been agreed between the British and General Soedirman, the Commander of the Indonesian

Army. Delegates from the Indonesian Army in Batavia arrived in Medan to explain the broad instructions of the truce to the local Indonesian leaders and to impress upon Army units the importance of observing it. Meetings were held between the Dutch and Indonesian representatives in Medan under British auspices to ensure the smooth operation of the truce but there were disagreements over demarcation lines between the forces. The Dutch held on to the positions they had earlier taken over from the British but Indonesian forces apparently used the truce to move their defences towards the Dutch perimeter. The situation was still unresolved by the time 4th Indian Infantry Brigade left Medan on 21 November.[100]

Events followed a similar pattern in the case of the handover of Padang. The recollections of Lieutenant Raschen illuminate the relationship between British and Dutch forces in Padang. His own responses to the arrival of these forces were mixed: he was impressed with their appearance yet was horrified by Dutch violence towards Indonesians. Such horror was similar to that felt by many in the British forces on Java recounted in Chapter 4. Raschen writes: 'The Dutch advanced parties arrived and highly smart and efficient they appeared to be.'[101] Of relations between British and Dutch junior officers he observes: 'At junior officer level the take-over could not have been more smooth or pleasant. We found the Dutch congenial and sociable fellows.'[102] He was, however, taken aback by the way the Dutch seemed to anticipate 'trouble' from Indonesians and how they acted when this manifested itself:

> When fifty Bren carriers, lightly armoured and open topped tracked vehicles, were unloaded, we all awaited the consequences with interest. We had not used armoured vehicles in Sumatra. The Indonesians' reactions included an unusually accurate grenade which exploded in a Dutch carrier. The Dutch took other carriers to the centre of the village nearby, faced outwards and blazed away with their Bren guns.[103]

Dutch troops belonging to 'U' Brigade took over the west sector of Padang's defences during October. This generated an increase in hostile activity. Local Indonesian leaders were warned by the British that, if this continued, 'stern measures' would be taken. Accordingly, these leaders agreed that Indonesian police should accompany Allied night patrols. November saw an overall decrease in hostile Indonesian activity although the positions held by the troops of U Brigade continued to be subjected to 'grenade and sniping attacks'.

In Padang, as in Medan, the British tried to bring Indonesians and Dutch together to implement the truce orders which had been received from Batavia. Initially, the local Indonesian Army commanders expressed unwillingness to enter Padang without an escort, exactly as happened on Java. A meeting was eventually arranged for 22 November, but the Indonesian Colonel who was supposed to attend did not turn up because he had not been permitted to bring his armed guard into the town. Those Indonesian representatives who did turn up stated that they had not been authorized to discuss either a ceasefire order or the details of the truce. An informal

meeting on the subject of 'civil affairs' was held instead. A meeting to discuss the truce was held two days later but deadlock was quickly reached. Indonesian commanders refused to admit that they had received truce orders and would not agree to order a cease-fire. The matter was unresolved by the time British troops left the town on 28 November.[104]

The handover passed off peacefully in the case of Palembang. A greater state of harmony between the British and local Indonesian leaders appears to have prevailed here. In the words of the British: 'The whole question of the arrival of NETHERLANDS TROOPS and the handing over to them of our responsibilities was discussed fully and openly with the Indonesians and resulted in a peaceful handover with no incidents whatsoever.'[105] Dutch troops belonging to 'Y' Brigade arrived in late October. An informal meeting was held on 3 November between Dutch, Indonesian and British representatives at which 'an extremely friendly atmosphere prevailed throughout. The Indonesians guaranteed to do their utmost to maintain the peace after the British forces had gone.'[106] Relations were equally harmonious between British and Dutch forces. The last night in Palembang of 3/4th Gurkha Rifles, who were based in the town's fort, is recounted in the history of the regiment: 'The battalion which relieved us, an Ambonese battalion led by Dutch officers, shared the small fort with us on our last night there. Next morning we handed over the quarterguard with full ceremony and then, with expressions of mutual esteem, parted from our allies.'[107] Unlike the situation in Padang recounted by Lieutenant Raschen, there does not appear to have been any violent Dutch action against Indonesians. The last British troops left Palembang on 9 November.[108]

6

MORALE

The morale of British officers in British and Indian battalions

The Second World War necessitated the call up of vast numbers of young men from school and university to serve as officers in the British and Indian Armies. Older men were taken out of developing careers. After an initial period of training, they were commissioned and often sent long distances to join their units. They were responsible for the lives of the men under them. In the case of the Indian Army, this meant responsibility for sepoys from a different culture. They experienced many privations and were made both to witness and carry out all the appalling acts which characterize war. After hostilities were officially over, they were sent to Indonesia, a country in a state of political upheaval, to fight in a guerrilla war. Once again, atrocities, exhaustion, privation, fear and anxiety were commonplace. In speaking to some of them today, there is a strong sense that their experiences, first in Burma and then in Indonesia, took their youth from them and left them saddened and embittered.

The end of the war brought with it different concerns. Captain Bramwell of 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles recalls: 'the thoughts of regular officers, both Indian and British, began to turn to their future postings, complicated as they would be by the imminence of independence and the end of the Imperial Army.'[1] This theme of the future of the Indian Army was dwelt on by a War Office report on morale of the time: 'Both the C.-in-C., ALFSEA, and the Adjutant-General in India say that British officers in the Indian Army are very apprehensive as to their position in the post-war Army.' Uncertainty about the possibility of the complete 'nationalisation' of the Indian Army, the report continued, had led to doubts as to whether the Indian Army intended to retain British officers for some time or whether they would only be retained as 'caretakers' until their services could be dispensed with. 'The fear in the minds of these officers is that they will be thrown up at an age when it would be particularly difficult to make a new career for themselves.'[2]

For others, the situation was different, as Captain Bramwell recalls: 'Emergency Commissioned officers, some territorials and others, volunteers from school, were

beginning to think of home and of returning to former careers or starting university courses. Demobilisation was much in our minds.'[3] On being told in Singapore that he was to be sent to Java, Captain Freeman, on the Staff of 5th Indian Division, was not impressed: 'We had done our fighting: we had been fighting for five years. I was bloody cross, quite frankly. I was having rather a nice time in Singapore after all the fighting, with swimming pools and everything. We didn't think that we were going to have to fight.'[4]

Major Henstock of 5/6th Rajputana Rifles, who fought in the Battle of Surabaya, recalls that, having come through the fighting in Burma, he was not keen to expose himself to unnecessary risks in Java. He found it tiresome being shot at by Indonesians and was glad to go home when his number came up in May 1946.[5] Before leaving Java, he had the opportunity at least to hint his feelings to Mountbatten, when the latter visited Bandung: 'I commanded the Guard of Honour for Mountbatten at the airport. He remarked that there were few Burma Stars [soldiers who had fought in the Burma campaign] and I reminded him of our losses at Surabaya.'[6]

A certain amount of discontent was felt towards the Labour Government in London. Gordon Eadie of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles felt that the Government did not appreciate the situation in Indonesia and that Ministers should have gone there to see conditions for themselves. Only Members of Parliament without office ever did, such as Harold Davies, whose visit will be mentioned shortly. Eadie felt that the Government made the Army take all the risks and treated it as if it were expendable. He says that other officers in the battalion were conscious of this, as opposed to the Gurkhas themselves, who 'didn't give a damn'. As a result of this sense of cynicism, Eadie recalls, officers were most particular in safeguarding the lives of their men and in looking after their welfare, determined, as it were, that they should not die in a meaningless sideshow.[7] The recollections of Captain Bramwell of 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles are similar: 'That men who had served gallantly in a long war, fought as a crusade, should lose their lives in a nasty little side show was a tragic waste, the memory of which rankles to this day.'[8]

Major Arkell, the Second-in-Command of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, was dismayed at what he saw as the Labour Government's injunctions to British commanders in Indonesia to treat with the Republican authorities as with a legitimate government. In April 1946, he wrote a long letter to his parents. His father, Sir Noel Arkell, Chairman of the Swindon Division of the Conservative and Unionist Association, forwarded his son's letter to Churchill. Sir Noel wrote: 'After a long silence we have today received a letter from him, and in response to his request therein I have decided I can do no better than to send you a copy of the bulk of what he writes.' Sir Noel urged Churchill to do what he could: 'I am painfully aware that unless one is red, one is a voice crying in the wilderness, but in you we have at least one person they dare not treat with contempt … I feel such a matter could not be in more experienced hands than yours.' The letters of Sir Noel and his son were circulated among members of the 'Consultative Committee',

that is, the Shadow Cabinet, prior to its meeting, but the issue of British policy in Indonesia did not find its way into the 'Conclusions' of the meeting.

Throughout his letter, Major Arkell was dismissive of the Indonesian Government's composition and its capacity to govern: 'What really gets us down is seeing this lovely, previously well governed country, handed over to a lot of Jap collaborators and petty murdering bandits – the Indonesian "Government"'. Much of his dislike of the Republican Government was motivated by the deeds of 'extremists'. He did not appreciate that they often acted independently of the Indonesian Government. 'You remember the plane crash and murder of the 22 survivors? You ought to see what doesn't get in the papers! I was present at the exhuming of 200 Dutch bodies in Bandoeng the other day. Some had been buried alive, some incredibly foully and obscenely lacerated.' Arkell went on to demand that a tough stance be taken with the Indonesian Government: 'These Indonesians still hold some fifty thousand Dutch in conditions as bad as Belsen. Do people in the world realise what they are doing by allowing them to remain there? A firm line must be taken NOW, or do political considerations blind people to every common humanity?' He urged his father to take action:

> If you have any influence whatsoever at home, press for inquiries into the real situation in Java. What is the Indonesian Government? Who are the men who compose it, and their records? What is their popular backing, and why cannot the Indo Ministers themselves travel in Java without the risk of murder and kidnapping. Why are their Generals issuing orders to attack us and our supply Convoys when it can only mean murder and starvation for helpless Dutch women and children, and while their Foreign Minister is protesting peaceful intentions while negotiations are on? Do what you can. It may do something towards bringing daylight on a dirty and tragic business.[9]

Major Arkell was killed in an ambush in the area of Bekasi, to the east of Batavia, on 21 August 1946.[10]

In early March 1946, a British officer on the Staff of 23rd Indian Division evaluated the success of the British intervention thus far in a letter to Lieutenant-Colonel Hunt, the senior Intelligence Officer in the Division. The tone of the letter, forwarded to the Foreign Office in London, is one of gloom. Evidently, it was taken to be symptomatic of a low state of morale on the part of officers in general and therefore to be worthy of attention. One factor which he dwelt on was the miserable state of the internees: '[The Dutch] say we have failed to protect and rescue their internees (perhaps 2,000 have perished and another 14,000 remain in Indonesian hands).' He said that many Dutch people were living in conditions – even in British occupied areas – equally as bad as during the internment by the Japanese, solely due to the cramped sectors occupied by the British. 'They are miserable and jumpy, of very low morale. We could only have improved their lot by military action which would involve us in the responsibility for the deaths of

thousands more Indonesians.' The officer then went on to draw attention to the failure of the British to achieve their other task, that of rounding up and repatriating Japanese Surrendered Personnel: 'This again could only have been achieved by military action as many of them gave their arms to the Indos and are staying put in Middle and East Java far from our occupation areas. The Indos will only let them out if we evacuate Java!' His closing remarks were pessimistic indeed: 'In a short time we shall quickly be able to slink out and be replaced by Dutch troops; slink out to lick the wounds of 1,000 casualties in five months – one division alone – : quickly retire and ponder over a "dishonourable" phase in the history of the army.'[11] Such feelings of cynicism and bitterness, however, were not universal. Captain Lloyd-Jones, who served with 2nd Buffs in the Surabaya area, states that he had a 'conformist' attitude to the Government's overall direction of events, that he supported it and believed that its policies were right.[12]

As far as diversions were concerned, it is clear that British officers were the most fortunate. In Batavia, officers had the run of the Box Club which, by the time of 23rd Indian Division's departure from Java, was said to be 'notorious throughout the East', though without further explanation. When Divisional Headquarters moved to Bandung in February 1946, another officers club was set up. This eventually became the Anglo–Dutch Officers' Club.[13] In Surabaya, there was a club at which officers amused themselves by playing indoor rugby with the hat of one of the Brigadiers.[14] British officers were generally either 'bar proppers' or in search of 'popsy'.[15] Mention has been made in Chapter 4 of the way in which social life was made more agreeable by the presence of 'large numbers of pretty Dutch girls'.[16]

The morale of British other ranks

At the end of hostilities, the concerns of conscripted British other ranks were similar to those of junior officers: they wanted to get back into civilian life. This was noted in a War Office report entitled 'Morale in India and the Far East', written in October 1945: 'The prospects of repatriation, whether for release or on completion of his overseas tour, of getting a house and a job, remain the major preoccupation of the Service man in the Far East and outweigh in importance all other factors affecting his morale.'[17] Other ranks who served with 6th South Wales Borderers do not recall that there was any discontent in the battalion but do state that people were anxious to get home. One states that he saw Churchill as a 'warmonger' whose policies would keep people in the Army forever; he therefore voted against him in the election of July 1945.[18] Ian Gibb, the Lieutenant who served in 1st Seaforth Highlanders, paints a similar picture of the men in the battalion. He says that 'morale was very high' and that it was useful to have a job to do in the Netherlands East Indies so as to keep the troops occupied as troops stationed in India at the time got bored. 'Most of the men in the battalion were wartime conscripts. They had fought hard in Burma. They were keen to get home but did not resent having to undertake operations in the Netherlands East Indies.'[19]

In the case of the 2nd West Yorks, it is possible, though difficult to prove, that the story was different. The battalion was part of 9th Indian Infantry Brigade of 5th Indian Division. According to Captain Wright, who was on the Brigade Staff, by the time the battalion arrived in Surabaya in November 1945 to take part in the reoccupation of the city it was composed of volunteers for the RAF who had found that the RAF did not want them because the war in Europe had ended. They had been transferred to the Army and drafted into the West Yorks to replace those who had left the battalion as part of the repatriation scheme. The last thing they wanted was to fight an urban guerrilla war in East Java. During the reoccupation of Surabaya, the battalion apparently suffered some severe casualties. 'Other British troops were asked to give blood to those who had been injured. Two soldiers had lost their legs. After that, Brigadier Brain eased the West Yorks out of the way. I think he realised that severe casualties would cause trouble.'[20] The battalion was apparently to be preserved so that its morale might not collapse entirely. The published history of the Regiment has nothing to say on the matter, though it does note that the battalion was understrength in terms of both officers and men owing to the repatriation scheme.[21] The Brigade War Diaries back up what Captain Wright says about casualties. The entry for 15 November 1945 is as follows: 'Direct hit by shell on 2 W Yorks section. 4 badly wounded. 2 W Yorks relieved 4 MLI [Mahratta Light Infantry] KAMPEMENSTRAAT. All quiet whole Bde front following takeover.' The entry for 21 November reveals a further move on the part of the West Yorks: '1 Madras relieved 2 W Yorks and became part of 9 Bde. 2 W Yorks became Div troops.'[22] Neither officers nor men of the battalion have come forward with their own version of events.[23]

Attitudes to Indonesians and Indonesian independence varied. Captain Lloyd-Jones, who served with 2nd Buffs, recalls that the men of the battalion were sympathetic to the national aspirations of the Indonesians.[24] A number of official reports and other documents confirm this impression by pointing to an unease on the part of British troops at straying too far from the basic humanitarian objectives of the intervention and acting to restore the Dutch colonial empire. In a telegram to the British Chiefs of Staff dated 21 November 1945, Mountbatten stated: 'Our troops went into Java with the highest possible morale. They are still fighting extremely well and their patience in carrying out difficult and distasteful operations has been beyond praise.' He then warned: 'I feel it is my duty to point out that much of our difficulty is due to the fact that there is widespread suspicion that our policy is in fact other than has been officially given out.'[25] In another telegram of 27 November, Mountbatten returned to this theme. He said that, with regard to morale, both British and Indian Army troops were being 'got at in a small way'. By this, he presumably meant Indonesian propaganda. 'So long as they are engaged in the rescue of women and children they are quite happy. Once that is done and there is no definite object than putting back the Dutch they are not happy and should not be kept for very long on this task alone.'[26] Colonel Nangle, the War Office Liaison Officer sent out to keep the War Office better informed as to conditions in Indonesia, reported in a similar vein: 'The British troops, while

being very ready to guard and care for the A.P.W.I. women and children and to fight any Indonesian who attacks them, are inclined to question the reason for being in JAVA at all.'[27]

Disinclination to restore Dutch rule in Indonesia on the part of British servicemen was drawn on by a veteran of the occupation, W. H. Ashmore, whose rank is not known, in a letter which he wrote to Clement Attlee in July 1946 urging a British withdrawal: 'None of us ever liked the job we had to do there but most of us I think understood the circumstances, or thought we did, and we did have the satisfaction of many thousands in distress being greatly helped.' But the situation was now different, Ashmore went on: 'the Dutch can look after their own people and I would like to impress upon you the necessity of getting our troops out of there completely at the earliest possible moment.'[28]

One document which provides startling evidence of discontent on the part of British other ranks with the British mission in the Indies and with the plight of ordinary Indonesians is a letter written to Ernest Bevin by a Staff Sergeant and his colleagues in January 1946. These men were probably from one of the many administrative units in Batavia. The letter was neatly written and articulate, evidence that its writers spent a great deal of time ruminating on the rights and wrongs of the situation in which they found themselves. The Staff Sergeant and his colleagues began by saying why they were writing: 'Having read of the Tory plaudits on your foreign policy speeches, and of Labour Back Benchers' dismayed silence, and subsequent vocal criticisms, we are impelled to express our opinions of Britain's military activities in Java.' First on the list of grievances was the appalling condition of the Indonesian people: 'Universally barefooted, many clad in rags, and suffering from hideous untreated diseases; living in wretched bamboo huts, earth floored; the filthy canal acts as bath, w.c., and laundry, all under the town's gaze.' Such conditions, said the Staff Sergeant, were of long standing and were not merely due to wartime inflictions; 'the Dutch declare it was a MODEL COLONY!' The letter went on to accuse the British of 'clearing the way for waiting Dutch Forces, NOT in Freedom's cause but for Imperialism's "oppress and exploit" policy!' It also objected to Dutch actions on the ground: 'Dutch troops, aided by native spy informers, seize "political suspects" and incarcerate them in hellish prison conditions, inspected and denounced by British Military Staff Officers.' The letter finished off by making a number of demands. A British declaration was demanded, recognizing the Indonesian Republican Government and its constitution, as was a cessation of war supplies to the 'Dutch vultures'. Also demanded was the 'immediate despatch' of an investigation commission of civilian MPs to Java; '"pacified" Batavia would enable them to see, in safety, the abyss of disease, squalid misery and ignorance, in the streets and market places, which the Dutch Imperialists (and British), have caused, countenanced and would perpetuate.'[29] There is no record of a response by Bevin to this letter.

There was also resentment of Indonesians on the part of British other ranks and indifference towards the question of Indonesian nationalism. In a report on the morale of the Seaforth Highlanders written in April 1946, Major Maclagan, the

temporary commander of the battalion, said: 'Our original attitude towards the Indonesians was one of some sympathy, but as a result of the atrocities that they have perpetrated, and the treacherous attacks that they have made on the British forces, there is certainly no sympathy for them now.' As a consequence of this, said Major Maclagan, there was no lack of keenness to 'have a "go" at any armed Indonesians' when an opportunity presented itself.[30] Ian Gibb, who served with the battalion as a young Lieutenant, does not recall that the men talked much about the question of Indonesian nationalism.[31] This mixture of hostility and indifference was not confined to the Seaforth Highlanders. When questioned about their attitude towards Indonesians and Indonesian nationalism, other ranks who served with the South Wales Borderers state that 'it was difficult to sympathize with people who were shooting at you'.[32]

Basic concerns such as amenities and accommodation had as much effect on the morale of British other ranks as political issues. This was noted by Harold Davies, the MP for Leek in Staffordshire. He went out to Indonesia to visit the troops and, in January 1946, set down his impressions on morale: 'After having visited both the officers and the men in their quarters, I was convinced, as a result of talks to B.O.Rs. and others, that it is not true that the morale of the troops is low. In my opinion, it is extremely high.' He went on to identify two issues which would affect morale. The first was food: 'Food, the main grievance is that the men get rather tired of dehydrated vegetables, and, while the supply of fruits and other materials is plentiful, it would be a good thing if we could possibly, at least occasionally, supply less dehydrated foods.' The second was mail: 'His Majesty's Government must realize the highest morale raiser to our troops is the quick and uninterrupted delivery of mail. Nothing is worse for morale than lack of news for men. This was the only major grievance I encountered in N.E.I. and I consider it fully justified.'[33]

In his report on the morale of the Seaforth Highlanders, Major Maclagan focused on such issues as accommodation and clothing: 'While exceedingly proud of our position as the only British Battalion in the Division, it has been discovered, this role has its disadvantages e.g. in always having to take over quarters from Indian Units, whose requirements and layout are widely different to a British Unit.' One should not infer from this that Indian troops themselves were happy with the undoubtedly primitive accommodation which so offended their British comrades: recent testimony by Indian other ranks, interviewed as part of a television programme on the Indian Army during the Second World War, indicates that they were disgusted at the accommodation provided for them.[34] Then there was the issue of Highland Dress: 'Considerable disappointment … is felt at the fact that the issue of Highland Dress, promised in August 1945, before we left INDIA, has not yet materialised. There is great eagerness to walk out in the Kilt, presumably because they feel that it cuts a dash with the girls!' Major Maclagan considered that the issue of Highland Dress 'would definitely have an uplifting effect on morale, as it would help men to take a special pride in their appearance and turnout'.

A cause of concern for Major Maclagan was the incidence of venereal disease among the men of the battalion. That they should be seeking casual sexual encounters was attributed by him to restlessness, 'a natural reaction to the end of the war and approach of demobilisation, and also to the unsettled conditions in this country'. He observed that his men were 'disinclined to read and lead a quiet life'. It was a problem that could not be dealt with at battalion level; instead, commanders of higher formations should see to it that 'sports grounds and sports equipment, frequent concerts and cinemas and organised dances' were provided.[35]

Venereal disease was a serious problem in the Indies, although no figures are available. It was noted by 37th Indian Infantry Brigade Headquarters that 'BATAVIA has probably the highest VD rate in the area occupied by Allied Forces'.[36] 1st Indian Infantry Brigade Headquarters were similarly concerned: 'The incidence of VD is serious and the figures are sufficiently high, particularly among BORs [British Other Ranks], to occasion some disquiet.' All possible measures, it was said, were being taken to counteract it. 'The institution of an official brothel, even if it were possible, would probably not be a success, as alternative opportunities are practically unlimited.'[37] Brothels were accordingly placed 'out of bounds', but this did not deter British personnel, as Ian Gibb of the Seaforth Highlanders recalls. One night, he was sent to raid a building with a few men. The men got into position and then burst in to discover that they had chosen the wrong building. They had entered a brothel:

> Either I had been wrongly briefed or I had read my map wrongly. The girls and their clients appeared stunned but the immediate problem for me was that a number of the clients were British paratroopers, still dressed or half dressed in uniform. Brothels were out of bounds to soldiers and it was an offence for them to be caught in them. However in the circumstances I decided to turn a blind eye.[38]

'Vice-Patrols' were sometimes undertaken by two officers in a jeep who would go round checking up on brothels.[39]

With regard to troop morale, another issue which needs to be addressed is that of desertion. This, as will shortly be seen, was principally a problem in the case of Indian personnel. Nevertheless, the author has obtained evidence from Brian Aldiss that a British private in the South Wales Borderers deserted to the Indonesian side and lived with an Indonesian woman. Aldiss recalls walking along a Medan street one day when a convoy of vehicles rushed past him. The convoy contained a military vehicle and two cars. The British deserter got out and did some shopping. Other British personnel were, according to Aldiss, 'half scornful, half envious' of the existence this man led. A patrol of South Wales Borderers apparently went into the jungle to track the man down. They found him and killed him.[40]

One way of maintaining morale was to keep the troops active by undertaking patrolling and other military operations. When the troops were not so occupied, it was essential that they had decent recreational facilities. Efforts were undertaken

towards this end throughout the occupation. A YMCA was set up in Batavia and a Naafi was later established. In Bandung, there was the Concordia Club, although this was 'rather far away and not so well patronised as it deserved'.[41] In Semarang, the men of 5th Parachute Brigade, now deprived of the night life of Batavia, had to make do with a club known – unsurprisingly – as 'Pegasus Club'. It provided the men with 'an excellent dancehall, at which the Brigade dance band performed; a supper and snack bar, a hairdressing shop, a first class library and reading room.' Accommodation in Semarang was said to be 'excellent and fully up to peacetime standards.' Sports grounds were set up on which football, rugby and hockey were played. Football matches were played with Chinese teams. There was bathing in the outer harbour and two cinemas were set up. A Brigade newspaper was set up, again called 'Pegasus'.[42] As has been seen in Chapter 3, men of the Brigade were able to vent their concerns about the use of Japanese troops on the Semarang perimeter by writing to the editor, albeit that this brought about a reprimand from their Brigadier. On Sumatra, men of 1st Lincolns, who were stationed in Padang in the early part of 1946, were given ample recreational facilities. A swimming pool was opened and the Royal Navy took parties to islands for swimming. There were rugby and football matches within the battalion, with other units and even with the Indonesian police.[43] As in an English public school, sport was seen as a means of keeping people away from 'unwholesome' distractions and there could not be enough of it. Another means of keeping the troops occupied was to provide theatrical entertainment. Despite the fact that ENSA was derided as 'Every Night Shit Again', an ENSA Concert Party visit to Bandung in March 1946 went down well: 'An ENSA Concert Party has visited BANDOENG at long last and was very much appreciated.'[44] Headquarters 23rd Indian Division and Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies also put on their own shows which were described as 'revues'. In addition, there were static and mobile cinemas.[45] Brian Aldiss recalls that supplies of alcohol were plentiful:

> As the Jap Army HQ in Brastagi was investigated by the incoming British forces, it was discovered how much booty they had accumulated during their three-year tenure of the island. Some of this booty was released to the troops, including drink. The most precious Dutch liquors had been stored away, now to be liberated. To our mess every Saturday morning a large wooden crate was delivered. We opened it with crowbars and drank its contents that evening. The drinks varied, week by week.
>
> I remember the riotous kümmel evening. At the end of it, a mate and I carried or dragged the RSM [Regimental Sergeant Major] to his room, slinging him comatose on his bed. My friend ripped the electricity cable off the wall on our way out, and half the camp was plunged into darkness.
>
> The crème de menthe evening is also etched in memory. There I sat, beaming among friends, with a one-pint beer glass full of the green liqueur in my fist. It all went down. To the best of my memory, it stayed down.[46]

Political repercussions of the use of Indian troops in Indonesia

Although the morale of British officers and other ranks was low at times and protests were made to the British Government and the Opposition, it was the use of Indian troops which sparked serious political argument. Before examining the morale of Indian troops serving in the occupation force in Indonesia, it is necessary to consider the political debate about their use which went on for most of the intervention. The fact that the overwhelming majority of servicemen doing Britain's work in Indonesia were from the Indian Army did not go unnoticed by Indian nationalist politicians. They used it as a stick with which to beat the British Government in London and, by implication, the British administration in India.

Britain's foremost critic was Jawaharlal Nehru, who had by now supplanted Gandhi as the chief representative of Indian nationalism. On 30 September 1945, before any Indian Army formations had reached Indonesia, he made a statement to the press at Allahabad: 'The use of Indian troops is being greatly resented in India and the British Government should know that it is likely to lead to grave and far-reaching consequences.' He went on to say that the Indian national movement as represented by Congress had had friendly contacts in the past with the national movements in Java and Indochina, that Indians were 'intensely interested' in the freedom of those and 'other subject countries of Asia and Africa' and that they would do everything possible to help them achieve their independence.[47] He returned to this subject in another statement to the press on 15 October. Again, he protested at the use of Indian troops in Indonesia, this time with more justification, as they were actually there, and urged that Indians should follow the example of 'Australian, Chinese and other seamen' and refuse to load 'war material meant for the suppression of the Indonesian Republic'.[48] Field Marshal Wavell, Viceroy of India since 1943, noted in his journal that Nehru seemed 'unable to restrain himself … perhaps imprisonment has quite upset his balance which was never his strong point'.[49] On 28 October, Nehru addressed a Southeast Asia Day meeting at Lucknow. He said that he regretted that India was not strong enough 'to prevent Indian troops from crushing the spirit of independence of the people of Indonesia and Indo-China'. He went on to warn the British Government of 'the growing feeling of resentment in the country against the use of Indian troops in Indonesia'. He ascribed a sinister motive: 'the British Government is afraid that if the liberation movement succeeds in Indonesia, it will have repercussions in India also.' In this, there was, as will be seen shortly, more than an element of truth. He also urged the King of Nepal 'to force the British Government not to use Gurkha troops against Indonesians'.[50]

From November 1945 onwards, the bitterness of his attacks increased. In an interview with the press at Lucknow on 17 November, he said: 'India is deeply moved by the horrors that are being perpetrated in Indonesia and our own freedom struggle is being powerfully influenced … Even their erstwhile enemies, the Japanese, are utilized against the Indonesians.'[51] In a speech at Patna on 24 December, he attacked British foreign policy and accused the new Labour

Government of being no better than its predecessors: 'The British attitude still betrays the same woodenness and diehardism. This is the old game of British imperialism. Whoever might be at the helm in England, its only object is to maintain its stranglehold over India and its colonies.' This also characterized the British attitude towards Indonesia, he said: 'To keep up Dutch imperialism the British army is fighting against Indonesian patriots.'[52] On 30 December, in the presidential address to the All India States People's Conference at Udiapur, he further condemned British policy in Indonesia and Indochina: 'there is a perilous semblance between these wars of intervention carried on by Britain and that other war of intervention, which fascist Italy and Nazi Germany waged in Spain, and which was the prelude to World War II.' India was watching the nationalist struggles in Indonesia and Indochina with 'growing anger and shame'. He regretted that 'Indian troops should thus be used for doing Britain's dirty work' in countries which, like India, aspired to be free. 'Recently we have the revealing glimpses, through the thick veil of censorship, of the way British, French and Dutch imperialisms have been functioning in Southeast Asia. Those glimpses have made us sick with horror and disgust, for they have equalled the atrocity stories from Germany.'[53]

Such protests did not go unnoticed by Wavell. From October 1945 onwards, he wrote to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, pressing for the withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia and Indochina. His correspondence can be followed in the *Transfer of Power* documents relating to India's acquisition of independence. On 1 October, he said: 'I hope that His Majesty's Government will be able to disengage the troops, both British and Indian, and leave the business to the French and Dutch.'[54] On 9 October, he said: 'from the Indian point of view it is of very great importance that the Indian troops should be disengaged from what is represented here as the suppression of patriotic risings, and I hope that shipping will be found to meet all essential needs.'[55] Pethick-Lawrence's response to these representations was equivocal. On 12 October, he wrote back to Wavell assuring him that it was also the desire of the British Government to disengage British and Indian troops from Indochina and Indonesia and to keep out of political trouble but that this could not be done until the arrival of French and Dutch troops which might take some time. He then mentioned the question of wartime alliances: 'Clearly we cannot totally disregard the interests of our French and Dutch Allies who, after all, have a strong claim upon us and especially so the Dutch.' Also of importance, he said, was the basic question of 'law and order': 'it is clearly our duty so long as we are the only people on the spot with effective forces to prevent so far as we can conditions deteriorating into civil chaos with great loss of life and destruction of property.' He denied that, in maintaining law and order in Indochina and Indonesia, Britain was taking sides in the political future of those territories.[56]

Correspondence between Wavell and Pethick-Lawrence went along these lines over the coming months: although Pethick-Lawrence repeatedly stated to Wavell that he appreciated his point of view, he did nothing to effect a change in government policy. On 17 October 1945, that is, after the British deployment in West and Central Java and in Sumatra but before the arrival of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade

at Surabaya, Wavell wrote to Pethick-Lawrence asking that an additional Indian Division not be sent to Java. He was worried, he said, lest further commitments in Indonesia add to the strain of the loyalty and discipline of the Indian Army which was already being tested by the INA trials.[57] Pethick-Lawrence replied that, although he had supported his point of view during the ministerial discussion, the decision had nevertheless been taken to send 5th Indian Division from Malaya to Java.[58]

In November, Pethick-Lawrence's attitude hardened. He told Wavell on 11 November that, if he wished to press his case 'still further', he should send him 'a much fuller statement' of the consequences which he apprehended in India for circulation amongst members of the Cabinet. He went on in a tone almost of admonition: 'We all realise objections from Indian point of view to the use of Indian troops … in this affair, but we have to weigh these considerations against … the general repercussions of our relations with our Allies if we abandon the Dutch.' He also dwelt on the effect that events on Java might have on British colonies: 'To abandon Java might lead to much wider withdrawals, facing us with serious loss of prestige in Malaya and Burma and leading to similar troubles there.'[59] In both of these respects, he was simply reiterating points which he had made in October. It can therefore be seen how right Nehru was to assert that the British Government worried that the situation in Indonesia might affect their position in India.

In late November, General Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, put himself firmly on the side of Wavell in a memorandum entitled 'Internal Situation in India'. He said that the Indian National Congress might intensify its campaign against the use of Indian troops in Indochina and Indonesia 'and thus attempt to suborn the Army'. Such a campaign, he observed, might in the long run have even more dangerous effects than the INA campaign as it would be based on the accusation that the troops were 'mere mercenaries'. In the opinion of Auchinleck, such a campaign could have grave implications: 'Our action in Java and French Indo-China is already being represented as European repression of national risings of Eastern peoples. If this is made a major political issue as is likely, it may have a serious effect upon the loyalty of the Indian Armed Forces.'[60] This was endorsed by Wavell in a communication which he sent to Pethick-Lawrence. He said that, whilst the INA trials had been embarrassing, the use of Indian troops in Indochina and Indonesia was more damaging in the long run because the case against it was 'from the Indian point of view, almost a cast-iron one' and there was 'little need to twist the arguments in order to make it look wrong'.[61]

By December, Wavell had shifted his ground. Having despaired of being able to bring about a withdrawal of Indian troops through the efforts of the ineffective Pethick-Lawrence, he pressed instead for a timetable for withdrawing the troops from 'active roles' in Indonesia. By 'active roles', he presumably meant killing Indonesians. The Indian Assembly was due to meet in late January and he wanted to reassure it on this question.[62] Pethick-Lawrence duly represented Wavell's request to Attlee. By this stage, the British Chiefs of Staff were weighing in on Wavell's

side. In a memorandum sent to the Cabinet Defence Committee, they dwelt on his and Auchinleck's reservations: 'The Viceroy has more than once protested against the use of Indian troops in fighting the Indonesians, and C.-in-C. India has now pointed out the undesirability from the political point of view of increasing the number of Indian formations on Java.' They too recommended that the Indian Army be brought out of Indonesia as soon as possible:

> The prolonged use of Indian troops in Java may … have an effect on the Indian political situation, and it would clearly be desirable if it were practicable, to avoid the use of Indian troops. In any case a course of action which reduces the use of Indian troops in Java to a minimum both in numbers and in time is desirable.[63]

When the matter was discussed by the Cabinet Defence Committee on 11 January, the conclusion was that no statement about a timetable for the withdrawal of Indian troops could be made while Dutch–Indonesian negotiations were taking place.[64] The tone of Wavell's reply to this news was one of cynicism, almost despair. He was, he said, fearful that, if he obtained a new Executive Council, they would resign on the issue of Indian troops in Java unless they met with satisfaction. Members of the Executive Council, which was headed by the Viceroy, had responsibility for Government departments. A number of Indians 'loyal' to the British administration served on it; Wavell wanted to make it more representative by bringing in nationalist politicians. 'If they were to resign we might stand to lose far more, I think, than we stand to lose by disappointing the Dutch in Java.'[65]

For Wavell, there remained one more humiliation. In a debate in the new Indian Legislative Assembly, the Government was defeated on an adjournment motion about the use of Indian troops in Indonesia. Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, Sarat Chandra Bose and Charman Lal, both members of the Indian National Congress, all spoke against the Government. Jinnah's speech was said to have been 'comparatively mild', but those of Bose and Lal were 'bitter'. They said that the imposition of the tasks in Indonesia on Britain by the Allied nations was no justification for the use of Indian troops against Indonesian nationalists. The Allied nations, they said, that is, America, Great Britain, Holland and France, were 'imperialist powers' whereas India was 'a subject power' and her troops 'should not be used against other subject peoples trying to secure their liberty'. They said that a mandate was needed 'not from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington but from the Indian people'. Wavell concluded ruefully: 'The whole episode was disgraceful and showed that the Executive Council was useless as an Indian Government, and that the Government of India was subject to His Majesty's Government and had no freedom at all.'[66]

Wavell had grasped the essence of the problem. He had never wanted the Indian Army to play a role in Indonesia but had been powerless to prevent its deployment. The Government in London had decided on its continued retention and had overruled all representations to the contrary. In this respect, the question of the

Indian Army in Indonesia provided another blow to the prestige of the British administration in India: where the INA trials demonstrated its inability to bring to justice those who had collaborated with the Japanese, the issue of Indian troops in Indonesia served to highlight its subordination to the Government in London.

The morale of Indian other ranks in Indonesia

Nehru's speeches and Wavell's correspondence with Pethick-Lawrence have given an impression of the passions and concerns which were aroused by the presence of Indian troops in Indonesia, but what of the concerns of the Indian troops themselves? Did such concerns expressed on their behalf in any way reflect the state of their morale on being faced with their tasks in Indonesia?

Some perspective on their general outlook can be gained from the recent work of David Omissi on Indian troops serving on the Western Front during the First World War. Omissi has brought together and published a collection of letters from Indian troops to families and friends in India and vice versa which came to the notice of the British censors. In his introduction, Omissi states that Indian troops were neither aware of nor interested in Indian high politics: 'The only Indian politician ever mentioned was Maulana Azad, and then only once, and in a more 'Muslim' than political context.' Only two men voiced the hope for self-government after the war, says Omissi, but neither were soldiers. 'The only letter which could in any way be described as subversively "nationalist" was written by a storekeeper.' Omissi goes on to describe the motivation of Indian troops: 'More than any loyalty to their British officers, the soldiers were motivated by an abstract sense of duty to the Sirkar, or government … the Sirkar was typically seen as the father of the people, to whom the soldiers had filial obligations.' Soldiers, says Omissi, felt obliged to fight if they received payment from the Government: 'Soldiers often expressed this relationship in terms of having "eaten the salt" of the Sirkar.'[67]

This picture needs to be qualified when considering the Indian Army in Indonesia. Indian nationalism had moved on since the First World War. The inter-war years were dominated by the civil-disobedience campaigns organized by Gandhi and the Indian National Congress, by more violent resistance to British rule such as the blowing up of post offices and other targets by 'terrorist' groups, by the imprisonment of nationalist leaders and by British actions such as the 'Massacre of Amritsar'. It also needs to be borne in mind that, in Indonesia in 1945–46, unlike the forces on the Western Front, Indian troops were occupying another Asian country. Nevertheless, the Army which Omissi describes was similar to that which went to Indonesia. That their presence in that country offended Indian nationalist politicians such as Nehru does not mean that they themselves resented being there. As Omissi says, Indian troops had a strong sense of loyalty to the Government. If that Government ordered them to go to Indonesia, then they would go. It must also be pointed out that soldiers' wages were sent home to support sometimes as many as three families. In this respect, the troops were 'mercenaries', in the words of Colonel Harrington, a senior officer on the Staff of 5th Indian

Division.[68] In addition, unlike the British units which served with them, which were made up largely of conscripts, the units of the Indian Army were made up entirely of volunteers. No conscription had been introduced in India during the war; instead, recruitment had been stepped up.

This is not to say that there were no problems with the Indian Army in Indonesia. It has been argued by Indian Army personnel who joined the INA during the war that the oath of allegiance to the British Crown was taken under duress, that India was at that time so poor that men had no choice but to join the Army in order to support their families.[69] There would undoubtedly have been Indian personnel serving in Indonesia who took this view of their oath. Desertion, though in no way widespread, was steady enough during the British occupation to cause concern at Divisional level and there were also several instances of mass disaffection. This part of the chapter will examine those instances where Indian morale suffered and where loyalties were tested whilst setting these in the context of an Army which held together in trying circumstances.

British officers who commanded Indian and Gurkha troops in Indonesia are a good source for an examination of morale, but their evidence must be handled with caution. They have a strong sense of pride in their regiments. When questioned about troop morale, their replies imply that such a question is unnecessary, that morale was naturally of the very highest. In the words of Major Koder, a Company Commander in 6/6th Rajputana Rifles on Sumatra, morale was 'excellent' and the Hindu Rajputs in his company were 'extremely loyal'.[70] Such sentiments are echoed by Captain Elliott, a Company Commander in 1/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles: morale was 'extremely good; it always had been'; it was 'extremely high all the time'.[71] Some British officers in the Indian Army are motivated by a sense of pride in their Regiments *vis-à-vis* others. Not only do they ascribe to the men of their units the highest possible morale but they also pass a less favourable verdict on the men of other units. This is particularly true of British officers serving in Gurkha Regiments. When questioned about troop morale by the author, Tony Carr, the Intelligence Officer of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, wrote back: 'You probably know enough about Gurkhas to accept that we didn't have a problem but for the British and Indian soldiers, airmen and sailors it was difficult – and easily understood.'[72] Evidence of this nature does little to enlighten the historian about instances where morale was less than high. It must also be remembered that officers commanded men who wanted to fight. If a man deserted, he ceased to be the responsibility of his Commanding Officer. It is true that operations to recover deserters were occasionally mounted but these rarely met with success. Even when they did, recovered deserters were sent back to Headquarters for interrogation by the Military Police. Thus the issue of desertion made little impact on officers in Indian Army units.

The recollections of officers are supplemented by documentary material. Desertions, as well as other incidents and issues relating to morale, are recorded in the War Diaries of the various formations and the subject is treated at length in Brigade and Divisional Intelligence Summaries contained in War Diaries. These

Intelligence Summaries were issued with varying degrees of regularity by Brigade and Divisional Headquarters and were circulated to Commanders and other senior figures. They contain sections on morale, desertion, 'subversive' Indonesian propaganda, the strength and organization of Indonesian armed forces, communal relations and British military operations, among other subjects.

British commanders at all levels attached great importance to 'keeping their men in the picture' so as to maintain their morale. Immediately after the Japanese surrender, General Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, telegraphed to the Chiefs of Staff on this matter. He wanted to know from the Chiefs of Staff what forces the Government of India would be asked to provide for 'occupational duties overseas' and as a reserve to be held in India. He said that the majority of men in the Indian Army had no wish to be demobilized and would be willing to serve as long as required but that they would want to know what their future prospects were and would want him, the Commander-in-Chief, to enlighten them on this point: 'It is essential for the maintenance of discipline, morale and contentment of the Indian Army that I should tell them how they stand.'[73] Colonel Pugh, who took over the command of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade in Surabaya after the death of Brigadier Mallaby, echoed this concern in a Monthly Intelligence Summary for November 1945. He said that the men under his command wondered what the real object of their military operations was and thought that, if they were engaged in a war, they should be given more support so as to bring the fighting to an end as quickly as possible; if war were not the object, they wanted the object and scope of their operations to be clearly defined.[74]

The policy outlined by General Auchinleck and Colonel Pugh was endorsed by Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies. On 22 November 1945, a letter was sent to Headquarters 5th, 23rd and 26th Indian Divisions. It began: 'It has been brought to notice that in some cases the reasons for our presence in N.E.I. and for the action being taken against the INDONESIANS are not fully understood by officers and other ranks.' It was pointed out that Indonesian propaganda was 'skilful' and that there was evidence that it had 'not been without a small measure of success in some units'. In order to combat this, it was ordered that talks be given to the troops by officers to point out that the United Nations had given the British the tasks of disarming and evacuating the Japanese and 'succouring RAPWI personnel'. The talks were to focus on the need to maintain law and order in order for these tasks to be carried out and were to stress that the occupation force was impartial:

> In order to carry out these tasks we must have law and order in the areas we control. We are NOT here to fight the Indonesians, but if they cause disorder it is our job to stop it. Racial and religious sentiments do not come into the question … We are not here to impose Dutch rule on the Indonesians by force of our arms; the relationship between the Dutch and the Indonesians is one which can only be settled among themselves. There is no discrimination between those who cause trouble, be they

> Indonesians, Dutch, Japanese or anyone else; action must and will be taken against those who disturb the peace and so prevent us from carrying out our tasks. The sooner law and order can be restored, the sooner we can do the job for which we came here, and the sooner we shall be able to go home.[75]

Another factor which the British considered vital for the maintenance of Indian troop morale was the provision of adequate recreational facilities. Throughout the occupation, these had to be fought for. In early December 1945, Headquarters 123rd Indian Infantry Brigade reflected on the consequences that attended an insufficient provision of amenities: 'Complete lack of amenities for IT [Indian troops] at present in SOURABAYA tends to increase incidents between Military and the civilian population.[76] When 1st Indian Infantry Brigade moved from Batavia to Buitenzorg in February 1946, the change in provision of amenities was noted. It was said that Buitenzorg's amenities were 'almost non-existent'.[77] By March, Brigade Headquarters pronounced the situation to be satisfactory with regard to sport: 'Sports grounds are quite plentiful and units have now a reasonable amount of sports equipment.'[78] In June, it was pointed out by Headquarters 37th Indian Infantry Brigade that British other ranks enjoyed better amenities than their Indian counterparts and that this had the potential to generate bad feeling: 'the more varied amenities of BORs tends to lead towards misunderstanding. This is not, however, serious but requires tactful handling.'[79] As late as July 1946, 4/8th Gurkhas, which had been brought in the month before to reinforce West Java, was suffering from a lack of amenities. Disappointment was felt at the lack of sporting equipment: 'this unit has been unable to obtain any football or volleyball bladders for the last five months either in Malaya or Java through amenity channels, and has on occasions been forced to buy through the black market at exorbitant prices.' Also scarce was equipment for more sedentary recreation: 'This Bn possesses not ONE Amenity wireless set, or gramophone, both of which are urgently required in the men's Recreation Rooms … It is high time that drastic steps are taken to improve the situation.'[80] By mid-October, the situation had improved, but the lack of 'wireless sets' was still a contentious question: 'It is essential to keep the men occupied and amused and wireless sets are invaluable in raising morale. It is strongly urged that every effort should be made to produce 2 or 3 sets as quickly as possible.' It was deemed 'scandalous that a Bn of over 800 strong should possess not ONE amenity wireless set'.[81]

An obvious way of keeping the troops occupied was to mount operations such as patrolling and searching on a regular basis. Major Koder, who commanded a company of 6/6th Rajputana Rifles on Sumatra, recalls that if aerial reconnaissance revealed the presence of armed Indonesians in the vicinity of Medan then a detachment of troops would automatically be sent out after them. This detachment would be sent out at night and would not be allowed back to base until midday the following day. The disadvantage of this, recalls Major Koder, was that by morning hostile Indonesians would have got wind of the

presence of a British patrol and it would have to fight its way back to base through a series of roadblocks.[82]

The morale of Indian troops was largely affected by news of local Indian circumstances and the conditions in the areas from which the men came. While Indian troops may have been largely impervious to the speeches of Nehru, they were anxious about their local communities. Often, the concerns of the men were about agriculture and living standards. In February 1946, Headquarters 1st Indian Infantry Brigade reported that the failure of the winter rains in the Punjab 'with the corresponding bad effect on the crops' was causing 'a certain amount of concern' among the men of the Brigade.[83] This concern was brought up again by the same Headquarters in April: 'All have unanimously agreed to cut their own rations in order that food in kind can be sent to India.'[84] In June, Headquarters 37th Indian Infantry Brigade reported that the men of 5/9th Jats had 'been lowered by their knowledge of the food situation'.[85]

Headquarters 1st Indian Infantry Brigade and Headquarters 37th Indian Infantry Brigade differed in their findings concerning the degree of interest in the INA trials and the sympathies of the men. A handful of INA officers were on trial in the Red Fort at Delhi charged with such crimes as 'waging war against the King-Emperor', murder, 'abetment of murder' and 'brutality'. The issue was seized on by Nehru and others, largely for political purposes, and an INA 'Defence Committee' was set up by the All-India Congress Committee. The matter aroused considerable interest in India and there were many related disturbances throughout the trials, which began in November 1945. There were serious demonstrations, related specifically to the trials, in Calcutta between 21 and 23 November 1945 and between 11 and 13 February 1946. The 'mutiny' of the Royal Indian Navy at Bombay, Karachi and elsewhere between 18 and 23 February 1946 was in part related to the trials. All defendants were found guilty of at least some of the charges against them. They were cashiered and lost 'pay and allowances'; some were imprisoned. At the end of April 1946, largely on account of the unrest which the trials were causing, General Auchinleck decided to discontinue all further proceedings.[86]

In December 1945, Headquarters 1st Indian Infantry Brigade reported: 'The trial of the INA officers in DELHI has not as yet produced any comment from Indian troops in the Bde. There is no doubt however that both the course of the trial, and the result, will be followed with great interest.'[87] In February 1946, this Headquarters reported that interest had grown and that some of the men sympathized with those who were being tried: 'It is reported that the trial of INA officers has been followed with great interest by the 1/16 PUNJAB and that the educated class sympathise with the Congress.'[88] The disposition of the men of 37th Indian Infantry Brigade was apparently different. In June, Brigade Headquarters reported: 'No great interest is shown in politics or in the INA trials or mutinies. There has been little sympathy for the mutineers who are classed as ill disciplined.' The men of this Brigade appear to have been concerned at the increase in anti-British incidents in India: 'It is quite clear that the IOR now expects to be told about things. Information given to the troops as to the places where

rioting or mutinies have occurred and how far they spread and as to the Govt action in dealing with INA or mutineers has a settling effect.'[89]

A serious worry for Commanders was the pan-Islamic question. Most of the Indian troops serving in Indonesia were Hindus but there were a substantial number of Muslims, grouped together in companies. The presence of Muslim troops did not go unnoticed by Indonesians, Muslims themselves. They lost no opportunity to appeal to the religious feeling of these troops in an attempt to persuade them to desert with their arms and ammunition and fight for Islam. The problem attracted the notice of Lieutenant-Colonel Nangle of the War Office when he visited Indonesia in November 1945. He reported: 'there are a few Mussulman troops who are being subjected to propaganda by Mussulman Indonesians and such propaganda may prove to be dangerous.'[90]

Pan-Islamic propaganda took a number of forms. At the time of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade's ordeal in Surabaya, a constant flow of propaganda was disseminated by means of loud-hailers. Indonesians called on all Muslims to unite under Islam and support 'Merdeka-Revolution'.[91] One Indian other rank was induced to desert by a report which he had heard and believed that Indian troops had burnt ten copies of the Koran and had destroyed an Indonesian mosque: 'He thought that his religion had been insulted and decided to fight for the ISLAMIC cause.'[92] Occasionally, Indonesians captured Indian Muslim troops and worked on their religious feelings in captivity. Two Corps signallers spent several months in Indonesian hands, being moved from place to place to the east of Batavia before escaping and giving themselves up to the British: 'During this time they state they were constantly requested to assist their brother Muslims to free this country of the invaders. They refused to fight and their food was then cut considerably and became very poor in quality.'[93] Notes were also passed: 'On 24 June an IOR in a coy position outside TJIANDJOER was handed a note, by a local, written in ENGLISH, inviting IORs to desert and join the INDONESIAN MUSLIM Army. A safe passage to SOEKABOEMI was guaranteed and the note was signed "Comd MUSLIM Army".'[94]

The testimony of British officers on the question of pan-Islamic propaganda varies considerably. Major Henstock, a Company Commander in 5/6th Rajputana Rifles, says that Muslim troops could not, in general, be trusted to act against Indonesians but qualifies this by stating that the Muslim company in his battalion, which he himself did not command, acquitted itself well.[95] Major Coham-Fleming, who commanded a Muslim company in 6/6th Rajputana Rifles on Sumatra, recalls that his men were susceptible to pan-Islamic propaganda.[96] The testimony of Captain Bramwell, who commanded 'D' Company of 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles on Sumatra, is quite different. 'D' Company consisted of Punjabi Muslims. He states that the men under his command 'were so professional that they would have burnt down their neighbouring village in India had they been ordered to do so'.[97]

Although there were fewer Muslim than Hindu troops in Indonesia, 60 per cent of deserters were Muslims.[98] On Java, where the majority of desertions occurred, Muslim deserters numbered over twice as many as Hindu deserters.[99] The monthly

desertion figures contained in the report of 26th Indian Division's occupation of Sumatra indicate a sharp rise in desertion during August 1946, the month of Ramzan, which was 'always a difficult time for fervent Muslims'.[100] Such figures suggest that religious feeling played a strong part in inducing a man to desert. Nevertheless, that other factors were present was pointed out in an Intelligence Review produced by Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies at the end of the occupation: 'The number of … [Muslim troops] who have deserted because they did not want to fight against fellow MUSLIMS are definitely in the minority and are chiefly restricted to the more politically interested soldier.'[101]

The War Diaries of the various battalions on Java and Sumatra, reveal that some units had a worse desertion rate than others. Two battalions of the same regiment are most notable: 8/8th Punjab on Sumatra and 6/8th Punjab on Java. Both battalions lost a steady stream of deserters during the course of the occupation who, by their names, were clearly Muslims. They all took with them their arms and 50 or even 90 rounds of ammunition. Sometimes, pistols and grenades were taken.[102] Two in the 8th battalion on Sumatra had the effrontery to send an Indonesian friend back to their battalion to collect their belongings: 'One INDON was arrested by A Coy in possession of a photograph of Naik Rahim Dad and Sepoy Mohd Ali Shah. He was also in possession of a letter from these two deserters asking for all their letters from home and their personal effects'.[103] What is also striking is that desertions went on right up until the departure of the occupation force from Indonesia: during October 1946, 8/8th Punjab lost two, and 6/8th Punjab lost three, sepoys, all with Muslim names.[104] Most desertions occurred at night, with sepoys leaving their barracks, but they would sometimes desert during a military operation. By contrast, other battalions of a similar religious mix do not seem to have had a desertion problem at all. 4/7th Rajputs, which served on Java and which was half Muslim, falls into this category.[105] The same is true of 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles, which was based on Sumatra.[106] It is possible, but difficult to prove, that some battalions had a better atmosphere than others. Some commanders may have been absentees while others may have had close contact with their men and tried hard to secure amenities for them. Some battalions would have been allocated more comfortable living quarters and been given more congenial tasks. Religious feeling alone was not always the motivation for desertion.

In the early stages of the occupation, the British thought up ways to combat pan-Islamic propaganda. A meeting was convened by Major-General Chambers, the Commander of 26th Indian Division, at Medan in northern Sumatra on 20 November 1945. Brigadier Forman, the Commander of 4th Indian Infantry Brigade, stated that he had measures ready to counter this threat. His reasoning does not appear particularly subtle:

> The outline of these counter-measures was that the troops would be lectured on the fact that in INDIA, on the Frontier, and also during internal disturbances in INDIA, the troops were NOT only called upon to fire upon their co-religionists but brother INDIANS. The INDONESE [sic]

> were NOT even their own race. In addition they had foully murdered and mutilated IT [Indian troops] in JAVA.[107]

While Islam provided the basis for a certain amount of fellow feeling between Muslim Indian troops and Indonesians, the opposite was often the case for Hindu troops. Major Henstock of 5/6th Rajputana Rifles states that the troops of his Hindu company 'laid into Indonesians with a vengeance'. It has to be remembered that the religious tensions of rural India were at this time being given new impetus by the question of independence and possible partition. It has been noted above that Indian troops were aware of what was going on in India. Rumours circulated among British officers that Hindu troops were taking bren gun parts back to India so that they could be reassembled and used in communal disturbances.[108] There is no evidence of clashes between Muslim and Hindu troops of the Indian Army in Indonesia or even of steps being taken to prevent such clashes.

In addition to the question of religion is that of whether Indian troops sympathized with the nationalist aspirations of Indonesians. The Intelligence Summaries of 23rd Indian Division on Java expressed the opinion in early March that the political motive for desertion, although of only minor importance, could not be discounted altogether: 'If women and good living were the sole motives for desertion, deserters would not be so concerned, as they are, in actively inciting by physical contacts and wireless further desertions.'[109] The observation concerning radio propaganda referred to the regular evening broadcasts in English and Hindustani from a radio station in South Bandung by a certain 'Captain Rashid' whom the British believed to be an Indian other rank deserter.[110] In mid-May, the Intelligence Summary expressed the opinion that Viceroy's-commissioned officers and senior non-commissioned officers who were of a certain political persuasion were at the root of the problem: 'The average unit commander is usually convinced that some VCO or Hav [Havildar] Clerk is at the bottom of the desertion trouble in his unit. This is quite possible as certain VCOs have been known to have expressed strongly sympathetic views on the INDONESIAN question.'[111]

While it was natural that Indian Army personnel should feel a certain amount of sympathy with the Indonesian national cause, it is also true to say that they felt at times a strong antipathy towards Indonesians, largely when the latter committed atrocities. In the aftermath of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade's ordeal in Surabaya, Colonel Pugh wrote that the atrocities committed against soldiers and civilians by Indonesians had instilled in all ranks a desire for revenge and that they were 'blood mad'.[112] This is confirmed by Captain Wright, the Brigade Transport Officer of 9th Indian Infantry Brigade of 5th Indian Division. When the Division arrived in Surabaya, the men heard stories about the way in which the Mahrattas and Rajputana Rifles had been butchered: 'Indonesians quite literally butchered people: they hacked them limb from limb. This was awful. The troops got quite worked up about it.'[113] The same phenomenon can be observed in Bandung in the Spring of 1946. Desertion had been a serious problem but, in the aftermath of the clearing of the south of the town, it virtually ceased. One of the reasons for this put forward

by the Divisional Intelligence Summary was as follows: 'troops have recently had a good share of active military operations against elements whose fanatical hostility has been only too obvious, not only on the convoy engagements but in patrol encounters on the perimeter of BANDOENG.' These, said the Summary, had shown up 'the falseness of the INDONESIANS' pretended friendship for INDIANS on various occasions when it has suited their purpose to be friendly'. The result was that Indian troops were 'more suspicious than ever, and less likely to be taken in than hitherto'.[114]

The author has only been able to discover two instances of mass disaffection on the part of Indian troops. Both were related by officers in 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry; neither is mentioned in documentary sources. David Snoxall was sent out to join 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry as a young Lieutenant. He arrived in Bandung on New Year's Day 1946. His safe arrival in the city was itself a remarkable feat in view of the danger from ambushes.[115] He recalls:

> When I arrived there was only a skeleton staff on duty. I was subsequently informed there had been a battalion parade on the parade ground at the end of which some at least of the men had refused to dismiss. As the Commanding Officer, Col. Crookshank, was on leave, the Second-in-Command, Maj. John Orr, was sent for. He addressed the battalion, following which the battalion dismissed and returned peacefully to their quarters. Following this event a havildar (sergeant) was returned to India and discharged from the Army. Rumour had it that he was a sympathiser of the Indian National Army, formed by Subhas Chandra Bose.[116]

Snoxall believes that the cause of the problem was that what the Mahrattas were being asked to do in Indonesia could too easily be characterized as the restoration of Dutch colonial power.[117] The second instance of mass-disaffection involved a battalion in the same Regiment, 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry. This was related to Snoxall by the Second-in-Command, Major Pearson, when the former paid him a visit during the summer of 2001:

> He said that he had had the same experience of a refusal to dismiss of a body of troops under his command. He said the particular grouse they had on that occasion was against an order that had been issued (he didn't say by whom) that Indian Other Ranks were to salute all Dutch Officers! This they refused point blank to do.[118]

In all, 746 Indian troops deserted.[119] Out of a total of 45,000 fighting men, this is around 1.7 per cent. Detailed figures are available for Sumatra. A total of 175 men deserted, of whom 38 were recaptured. The net figure of 137 was said by the report of 26th Indian Division's occupation of Sumatra to represent 0.8 per cent of the fighting strength of the Division.[120] In other words, the rate of desertion on both Java and Sumatra was small and can in no way have affected the operational effectiveness

of the Army of occupation. Nevertheless, for every soldier who deserted, there may have been many more who contemplated such an act. It would therefore be unwise to conclude from the low rate of desertion that morale was not a problem.

Indonesians used different methods to procure desertion, some of which have been mentioned earlier. The one most commonly used was women. Sometimes, women would try and entice a sentry. The War Diaries of 8/8th Punjab reveal that, in April 1946, men of the battalion who were guarding the docks at Emmahaven arrested three prostitutes who were trying to entice them out of the defended area. 'One of these prostitutes had completely undressed. These prostitutes were handed over to the Civil Police who took strong action against them.'[121] Indonesian men would also entice sepoys with stories of the women they would have if they deserted. This was the case with Sepoy Nahar Singh, a Hindu Rajput belonging to 6/6th Rajputana Rifles. This sepoy had come across an Indonesian fishing in the river behind the unit lines and had fallen into conversation with him: 'He gave a very bright picture of the luxurious life which Indians were leading in SOENGGAL [the place from where the man had come]. He informed the Sep that there were many Indians who had deserted from the Army and were now living there.' They had married beautiful women, the man said, were highly paid by the Indonesian Army, enjoyed the best privileges and were well respected. All of this had its effect on the sepoy so he decided to desert. 'The fisherman however warned him that those who took arms and amn with them were treated more respectfully and accorded a greater welcome than the others.'[122] This may explain why so many deserters took with them their rifle and personal allowance of ammunition.

Another method was to throw messages wrapped around stones, if physical proximity permitted. This was a method used in Bandung in the early part of 1946 when the British occupied the town north of the railway line and Indonesian forces occupied the south.[123] The response of the British was to withdraw Indian troops and put British troops in their place. Even then, Indonesians did not give up. A printed leaflet written in English was found near a British position. It appealed to 'Conquerors of GERMANY and JAPAN etc. to go home and not to fight for the DUTCH'.[124]

Related to this was the use which Indonesians occasionally made of Indian and Gurkha troops to approach a position and address it.[125] In the case of captured personnel, this ploy was apt to misfire: 'Attempts to suborn our troops [in Bandung] continue unabated, and along the railway line, quite openly. A Gurkha other rank, previously missing, was brought up to our railway posts to incite further desertion, under pressure from the TRI. He managed to make a dash for it.'[126]

Political propaganda was hampered by the language problem. In Palembang, in southern Sumatra, in March 1946, leaflets were posted by Indonesians reminding their 'Indian comrades in arms of their mutual aspirations for independence'. The Divisional Intelligence Summary observed: 'The leaflets … were rather unimaginatively printed in English.'[127] They made use of Indian mythology to persuade Indian troops not to oppose the Indonesian struggle:

> You have come here to disarm the fascist soldiers not to handle the rational spirit of the freedom loving Indonesians. You have come from different parts of India, from different Indian religious elements but still you are the brothers of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Sons of mother India where we saw Ram, Vishna, Sivaji, Ranapratap. You should not forget your past, you are the descendent of those great prophets. Our Sikhs brothers should remember the great Guru Govinda who fought for freedom the Holy Wars and so the Indonesians compare your beloved National Congress, Hindu Mahasava Muslim League and Akali Sikdal. You may see everything in the Indonesians if you love your own.

The leaflets also urged the Indian troops to follow the example of those in India who were making or who had made a stand against the British and to obey the instructions of Nehru: 'Remember the present Calcutta, remember the INA brothers, are you their brothers? Don't pull the holy name of your National father: Bapu Jawaharlal is forbidding you to raise your hand against the freedom struggle.'[128] Indonesians were able to produce more effective propaganda if they knew the language of the troops. On 12 June 1946, the Indonesian station master of Tjirandjang was arrested by the British in connection with 'seditious posters in Gurkhali', the language spoken by the Gurkhas.[129]

A bizarre method which Indonesians used to capture Indian personnel was related in the Weekly Intelligence Summary for 12 June 1946: 'Several cases of IORs being doped and then kidnapped by INDONESIANS have recently come to light. IORs walking on their own by day or night are selected by the kidnapping parties and offered cigarettes etc, the consumption of which produces an immediate state of unconsciousness.' The summary went on to say that, so far, three such cases had come to light, in all of which the Indian other ranks concerned had escaped from the interior of Java. 'It is considered that there are other cases of a similar nature involving IORs who have not yet been able to escape.'[130]

There were a multitude of reasons for desertion. As well as pan-Islamic sympathy there was political sympathy between fellow Asians fighting for independence, though the British did not rate this factor very highly: 'Desertions for political reasons have been small in the cases where a definite reason for deserting has been given, and it has been found that these few cases have again been confined to the more politically inclined soldier.'[131] It is also clear that the promise of women was effective in inducing a man to desert. In reporting the desertion of a number of Punjabi Muslims, a 1st Indian Infantry Brigade Weekly Intelligence Summary issued in May 1946 stated that the men 'were known womanisers and had been unfavourably reported on'.[132] In addition, there is evidence that men deserted if a certain grievance was not being addressed by the Army. On being interrogated, a recaptured deserter stated that he had made numerous requests for leave during the past 18 months because of the illness of his mother and each time his application had been refused. He had therefore decided that the Army was not giving him 'a fair deal' and had deserted. Another

revealed that he had deserted for no reason whatsoever while under the influence of drink.[133]

A further reason for desertion, in both Java and Sumatra, was that Indian other ranks thought that they could enjoy a higher standard of living than was possible in India: 'The majority of IORs who have deserted have been young men without land in INDIA and may have probably been influenced by prospects offered them by INDONESIANS of being given or being able to acquire land in this country.'[134] A 26th Indian Division Weekly Intelligence Summary reported in a similar vein: 'a P.M. [Punjabi Muslim] deserter is thought to have run away in the hope of moving up country and settling down with land of his own. This green fertile country makes a strong impression on the IOR's imagination.'[135]

Shame at contracting venereal disease impelled some Gurkha other ranks to desert. In May 1946, it was reported in a 1st Indian Infantry Brigade Weekly Intelligence Summary that, during the previous week, two Gurkha other ranks and seven Indian other ranks from the Brigade had deserted: 'The GORs involved are known to have had VD and as the attitude of the Regtl Centre is that, for such men, release and leave are inadmissable, it is thought that this was the reason for their desertion.'[136]

The majority of Indian other ranks who deserted had a miserable experience: 'There is a reliable report that many deserters have received more than their promised reward – women in abundance – and are now between the devil and the deep', noted a 23rd Indian Division Weekly Intelligence Summary for March 1946. Incapacitated as they were by venereal disease, and with no drugs to cure them, their Indonesian hosts had no use for them.[137] This miserable existence was starkly illustrated in the case of Sepoy Nahar Singh, the Hindu Rajput belonging to 6/6th Rajputana Rifles mentioned earlier. His case was reported on in an intelligence summary for the same month He was recovered during a reconnaissance in force by 4th Indian Infantry Brigade. He was in such a bad way that no immediate interrogation was possible. When visited by a senior Medical Orderly, he was only roused from the stretcher on which he was lying with great difficulty. 'He was obviously in grave mental distress and appeared to have undergone prolonged fear and hardship. He seemed relieved to be back with his regiment once more.' During his sojourn with his Indonesian hosts, Singh had been threatened with death by decapitation should he attempt to escape. He had contracted a 'virulent gonorrhoea infection' which had been so neglected by his captors that it had extended into the glands of both groins where large abscesses had formed. 'The IOR is markedly emaciated and has obviously undergone considerable deprivations. His condition is indeed tragic. It will require prolonged treatment and proper feeding to restore him to normal health. It is questionable, however, if he will ever be cured of the effects of his VD'[138]

Most deserters were ignored by their Indonesian hosts after about a month. They made a living for themselves either by paid employment or trading. Many repented deserting but were afraid to return to their units as they had given away their weapons. Some settled down happily. Nahar Singh revealed on interrogation

that he knew of three of his comrades who had married local women. He also said that he was aware of other deserters who had assumed an active role in the Indonesian freedom struggle. A Muslim sepoy by the name of Nur Mohammad had been undergoing punishment in his unit guardroom and had conspired with the sentry guarding him, also a Muslim. The two had then deserted. Nur Mohd went on to become a leader in the Volksfront, a radical Indonesian organization.[139] He went so far as to shoot a Hindu deserter who tried to return to his unit. A number of deserters were employed in 'terrorizing' the Indian and Chinese populations in the surrounding areas.[140] In addition, the British suspected that Indian deserters were engaged in mining the West Java convoy route, which they had previously been guarding: 'Rd opening tps destroyed 3 Brit mines … Skill in laying mines indicates 7 deserters from 71 Ind Fd Coy possibly involved.'[141] With the news of the British departure from Indonesia, many deserters tried to get their weapons back from the Indonesians so that they could return to their unit without receiving heavy punishment.[142]

As has been noted earlier, to maintain morale the British did their best to keep troops informed of wider events, to provide adequate recreational facilities and to undertake military operations to keep men active. The desertion problem prompted the British to take further measures. An appendix to a 26th Indian Division Weekly Intelligence Summary for March 1946 set out a number of measures. As it was suspected that the Indian community was playing a part in procuring the desertion of Indian other ranks, it was recommended that the investigation of the local Indian population be continued. It was at that time being carried out by members of the British Field Security Sections. All officers were to establish 'a much more intimate contact with their men' as well as 'a close association in both work and play'. Young officers were to 'improve their knowledge of the men's language and of their background and characteristics'. There were to be more Urdu news sheets and more talks to the troops by Viceroy's-commissioned officers. 'Open courts' were to be held in which Indian troops could 'air their grievances and make their suggestions'. This, it was thought, would do away with 'any imagined injustice that IOR's complaints are squashed at the Pl Comd level and never reach the CO.' In order to co-ordinate this proposed activity, it was suggested that 'weekly security and counter propaganda meetings' be held, to be attended by Subedar Majors of every battalion, at which all 'problems of note' could be discussed 'and a "hand out" be made of counter propaganda material to form the basis of lectures to tps during the coming week'.[143]

The British also took active steps against Indonesians procuring desertion. In early March 1946, a steep rise in the number of desertions in the Medan area of northern Sumatra seemed almost entirely due to 'subversive Indonesian activity' in using women to 'lure men away'. The British carried out investigations, interrogated recaptured deserters and discovered that there was in Medan a 'well organised and energetic subversive group' whose method was to contact Indian other ranks in coffee shops, bazaars and even in the streets and, with the promise of women, to arrange a night rendezvous. 'Information pointed to the fact that

from the rendezvous the jawans [troops] were being taken by car to outlying villages and later staged to far away towns in the hills west of MEDAN.'[144] Documents which they obtained from raiding Indonesian headquarters and the interrogation of arrested Indonesian suspects produced detailed information and revealed the locations of many rendezvous and also confirmed that the operation was widespread and well organized. The British decided to send out small parties of selected Indian other ranks to act as decoys 'in an endeavour to contact the intermediaries, gather information concerning the personalities involved, and to facilitate the eventual rounding up of the whole organisation'. One such operation was a failure. Several Indian troops, pretending to be deserters, met up with Indonesian 'agents'. They boarded a bus in the belief that this, as planned, would be intercepted by British troops. No interception materialized and it soon became clear to the men that they were suspected by their Indonesian companions. Two decided that they would have to escape. They got away after unsuccessfully prevailing on their companion, a Naik, to come with them. This man had decided to become a genuine deserter.[145]

Raids were frequently carried out on outlying locations to recover deserters but these rarely achieved the desired results. In the Batavia area, an intelligence gathering operation was mounted by a British officer who used Indian other ranks disguised as deserters to find out about genuine deserters. This operation was successful in that much information was gained.[146]

CONCLUSION

The overall picture that has emerged from this study of the British occupation of Indonesia is one of confusion. The British were out of their depth in a politically complex situation. It was one from which they did well to depart at the end of November 1946. As Lord Killearn confided to his diary on the 15th of that month: 'the path of wisdom for us is to clear out just as soon as ever we can. Every day we stay here means that we are concerned with some new and quite impossible problem, so let's get out and clear of it with the utmost speed.'[1]

The British acquired responsibility for Indonesia at short notice at the instigation of the Americans. The acquisition of this territory and southern Indochina, coming on top of outstanding commitments in Malaya, Siam, Burma and India, where the outbreak of communal violence was a constant threat, placed a serious strain on the resources of Southeast Asia Command. The Americans provided no intelligence; British intelligence gathering during August and September 1945 was ineffectual. The only accurate intelligence was obtained on the eve of the departure of British forces for the Indies. They therefore knew little about the locations of camps and numbers of internees and were unaware of the political changes going on in Indonesia. Their plan for the administration of the territory had been drawn up with the Dutch in anticipation of a territory-wide occupation during a military campaign against the Japanese. When the British were confronted with the reality of Indonesian Republican power and the revolutionary fervour of the population, they abandoned this plan, to the chagrin of their Dutch allies, and confined themselves to the occupation of certain key areas. During the early stages of the occupation, they had to control Batavia, the largest city in the Indies, with only three of their own infantry battalions. The Dutch military forces operating alongside them were more of a liability than a help and consequently had to be posted to the south of the city out of harm's way. In Batavia, the British had their first experience of urban guerrilla warfare. Novel and disconcerting, it was a foretaste of things to come. Their deployment into the interior of West Java was a ramshackle affair. Dangerously small units were rushed into the heart of potentially hostile territory to be reinforced as and when possible. The deployment in Central Java was equally, if not more, chaotic. The British had decided to go there late in the day when they

came to know of the large number of internees in the area. Having come to disarm and repatriate the Japanese, they were instead compelled to rely on them to an embarrassing extent: in Buitenzorg, the Kempeitai were given the task of guarding the internee camps; in Bandung, Japanese tanks and artillery were used offensively against Indonesian forces; in Central Java, Japanese units came to the rescue of beleaguered British forces in the interior. Anglo–Japanese co-operation, even friendship, in this surreal situation was such that the Japanese commander in the region was recommended for a DSO.

Notwithstanding these embarrassments and weaknesses, it was at Surabaya, in East Java, that the British experienced their greatest humiliation during the early period of the occupation. They had been obliged to go there to rescue the thousands of internees in the city who had been moved there by the RAPWI Organization from camps in Central Java. The wisdom of this was questionable in view of the fact that the strongest Indonesian forces were concentrated not in Central but in East Java. If ever there was to be a showdown between British and Indonesian forces, it would be here. It was here that Christison's policy of 'showing the flag' unravelled. It was not clear even when 49th Indian Infantry Brigade arrived whether its mandate was to occupy the city on behalf of the returning Dutch or leave, once the internees and Japanese Surrendered Personnel had been shipped out. It did not help matters that the British chain of command was riven by personal antagonisms and jealousies and that communication between Batavia and Surabaya was poor in the extreme. An unorthodox but workable agreement was made between Mallaby and local Indonesian leaders only to be undone the next day by the action of Divisional Headquarters, unaware of and, possibly, indifferent to, the predicament of the Brigade. The leaflet drop shattered Anglo–Indonesian understanding; moderates on both sides lost face. Indonesian forces now made a concerted attempt to drive the British force into the sea and nearly succeeded. The result of the initial phase of fighting was that Mallaby had been assassinated, that the British were hemmed into the dock area and that thousands of internees were in Indonesian hands. Stunned, humiliated, angry and painfully aware of the weakness of their position, the British had little choice but to embark on the reoccupation of Surabaya, landing the reinforcements which had been earmarked for the city before the arrival of Mallaby's Brigade.

Their experiences in Surabaya altered the British attitude towards Indonesians for the remainder of the occupation. Their policy now became two-pronged. They were quick to deal with what they termed 'extremism' if they felt that the security of their military position was under threat. They concentrated their efforts in West Java, mounting 'clearing' operations in the main cities and reinforcing the convoy route. The occupation, supposed to be a peacetime operation, had in reality become a guerrilla war. With little experience of such warfare, British and Indian troops resorted to brutal measures, such as execution of prisoners and burning of villages. These measures, as well as their banning of 'Independence Day' celebrations, stemmed from weakness and fear and were not undertaken at the instigation of the Dutch. At the same time, negotiations took place with Republican leaders at national

and local level over such issues as the gathering in of internees and surrendered Japanese from the interior and the running of day-to-day services in the occupied enclaves. There was also much co-operation, even goodwill, between British forces and Indonesians at village level.

Anglo–Dutch relations during the same period were equally varied. In the Batavia area, at the end of 1945 and the beginning of 1946, there was considerable tension between British and Indian forces on the one hand and Dutch-colonial forces on the other. The British perceived Dutch-colonial forces as ill-disciplined, trigger-happy and brutal towards Indonesians. Relations with the incoming Dutch European forces from March 1946 onwards were, for the same reasons, equally strained. Relations with Dutch internees were varied, ranging from the antagonistic to the intimate. At one end of the spectrum there were parties after curfew, relationships, even marriages, between British men and Dutch women; at the other was overt hostility from Dutch troops and civilians who felt that the British were not doing enough to restore Dutch power. The deployment of the first wave of Dutch troops in Java has been shown to have been shambolic. Relations between outgoing and incoming forces in Java were mixed: there was suspicion, antagonism and even hostile acts but also friendship and close co-operation. There was neither a 'special relationship', as between two colonial powers engaged in a systematic suppression of nationalism; nor were the British universally unpopular with the Dutch.

The British occupation of Sumatra has been shown to have been similar to that of Java. Donnison's suggestion that Sumatra was far easier for the British than Java has been questioned and refuted. Armed encounters between British and Indonesian forces, though on a smaller scale, were equally vicious and led to reprisals and counter-reprisals. At the same time, the British were compelled to recognize the reality of Republican authority on Sumatra and negotiate with leaders to achieve a range of tasks. As on Java, the implementation of a ceasefire was attended by a range of problems: Indonesian leaders and the vast array of Indonesian fighters, both regular and irregular, were too suspicious of Dutch intentions to abandon their military operations. It was only because Dutch forces from Europe arrived so late in Sumatra that there were no serious rifts between them and the British since it is clear that, even in the short time that they worked together, the British were horrified at Dutch brutality towards Indonesians.

With regard to the morale of the British–Indian occupation force, all categories of personnel were not only beset by varied anxieties such as their long-term career prospects or the situation in their home country but also felt keenly the moral and ethical challenges with which they were confronted on a daily basis. It was fortunate for the tens of thousands of internees penned up in the Allied bridgeheads and for the returning Dutch that the force maintained its discipline overall and withdrew in good order when its occupational duties were over.

All these findings have enabled a reassessment of the British occupation. 'Myths' which have up until now continued to exist and which have been outlined in the introduction have been exposed. The occupation was neither the systematic

betrayal, claimed by Professor Gerbrandy, through British indifference to Dutch aims; nor was it the brutal restoration of Dutch authority by a fellow colonial power, as claimed in literature on Indonesian nationalism; at the same time it was not the orderly and impartial affair portrayed in the official histories: the British in Indonesia were in fact out of their depth, fighting a guerrilla war in a situation of political complexity. In years to come, they would fight guerrilla campaigns with greater success, in Malaya and Kenya. But these were campaigns with limited objectives in their own territories where they were in control of the institutions of government and where independence was always the outcome envisaged. In Indonesia, the British still had a lot to learn about guerrilla warfare. They were at an additional disadvantage because the territory had been run harshly by the Dutch but was to be handed back to them. Indonesians knew this. For centuries, they had been on the receiving end of the harshness of Dutch rule. Although the British might mean well, they would inevitably leave the Dutch in a position of strength from which they could mount an assault on newly-won Indonesian independence.

On 17 December 1946, when the occupation had come to an end, Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Attlee Government, was asked in the House of Commons how much the intervention had cost the nation. He replied by giving a figure of £15 million and said that it was not at that time certain if any of this would be recovered from the Dutch Government.[2] This exchange epitomizes the nature of the British occupation. The British and Indian Governments and their armed forces had expended vast amounts of blood and treasure in occupying the colony of another European power and had gained nothing. They had gone to Indonesia neither to restore the pre-war Dutch colonial empire nor to take it for themselves but to carry out a humanitarian mission. In the words of Captain Wright of the Staff of 9th Indian Infantry Brigade, the British in Indonesia 'were on a thick ear to nowhere'.[3]

The British must be given credit for what they did. They saw themselves as providing a modicum of law and order in a territory which had been ravaged by the Japanese occupation. They would rehabilitate it and assist the partial restoration of European rule, which they deemed necessary in the short term. They were returning to Burma and Malaya and it was consistent that the Dutch should return to the Indies. The British were contemplating reforms leading to eventual independence and were talking with political leaders; the Dutch should be encouraged and assisted to do the same. The Japanese had to be disarmed and sent home; only a victorious Allied power could do this. Similarly, the thousands of prisoners of war and internees could not have been left there. It would be conjecture to say that they would have been murdered on the orders of the Indonesian Republican authorities, but conditions in the interior were unstable and there were many armed 'extremist' groups operating on their own initiative. The internees had to be brought out of the interior and looked after in the areas under Allied military administration. In addition, the British considered that only they were in a position to keep 'lawlessness' under control in the region.

In Section E of his *Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff*, Mountbatten paints a picture of an orderly, enlightened occupation, of a benevolent and neutral Southeast Asia Command bringing peace to a troubled country. He himself, he claims, was at pains to prevent death sentences for political crimes and the burning of Indonesian villages.[4] In reality, the confusion and strain of the situation led to the British frequently siding with either Dutch or Indonesians, as has been seen in Chapters 3 and 4, as the occasion demanded. It has also been seen that summary justice in the form of execution of prisoners and burning of villages went on on a day-to-day basis. Mountbatten and his subordinate commanders may have set out to be neutral, but the occupation, if it can be considered as neutral, was so not because the British consistently steered a neutral course but because the sum total of their actions added up to neutrality.

So greatly did the British diverge from the path of neutrality that the occupation has cast a long shadow over both Anglo–Dutch and Anglo–Indonesian relations. Anglo–Indonesian hostility flared up in 1963 over the inauguration of the Federation of Malaysia, a state which comprised the British possessions of northern Borneo. These bordered with Indonesian Borneo, or Kalimantan. The British Embassy in Jakarta was stoned and set on fire and many embassy staff and their families had to be evacuated. On the land border in northern Borneo, there was conflict between British and Indonesian forces. On 5 February 1964, Andrew Gilchrist, the British Ambassador, wrote to R. A. Butler, Foreign Secretary, on the question of future policy towards Indonesia. He made a passing reference to the British occupation of Indonesia: 'We should not forget – for the Indonesians do not – British armed intervention in support of Dutch colonialism in 1945–46.'[5] Hero's Day continues to be celebrated in Indonesia every 10 November, the date on which British–Indian forces launched the reoccupation of Surabaya. It is ironic that the pemuda, the vanguard of the Indonesian revolution, should have received their baptism of fire at the hands of the British rather than the Dutch.

It is arguable that, with the Dutch, feelings run deeper still. Theirs was a 'single-issue' empire: if they lost the Indies they lost everything. The British, who had the largest colonial empire and who retained many of their possessions into the 1960s, were never able to appreciate the Dutch predicament and the psychological blow which was dealt when Indonesia gained independence in 1949. Two examples illustrate the strength and persistence of Dutch resentment. John Taylor, currently Secretary of the 6th Rajputana Rifles Officers' Association, became a diplomat after leaving the Army. He had never served in the Indies. In the 1950s, he was posted to the British Embassy in the Netherlands. He attended a party hosted by an American colleague. A Dutch couple in their fifties came up to him and asked him why their country should lift so much as a finger to help Britain considering British behaviour in the Indies after the war. Taylor, still in his twenties, was taken aback by the vehemence of their attack. His American host tried to console him.[6] Pat Davis, who commanded a company of 4/8th Gurkha Rifles on Java, went on a painting course in the Dordogne in the late 1980s:

> One of the other guests was a retired Dutch lady doctor, a very charming and cultured individual, a frequent visitor to England. Somehow we learned that she had been an internee under the Japanese in Java. I questioned her a little. When she revealed the lasting bitterness with which she still regarded British policy during those post-war months, I had not the courage to reveal my own involvement. We, her country's ally and liberator after six long years of the toughest of wars, we, so she still felt, had betrayed her countrymen.[7]

It is hoped that the present study may help in finally laying to rest the myths which are still held by Dutch and Indonesians concerning the conduct of the occupation on the ground and which find a place in so much literature on the subject. This has been accomplished not by whitewashing the episode, as Mountbatten and the British official historians have done, but by confronting what to them were unpalatable facts and demonstrating the mistake of attributing to the British force a settled *modus operandi*.

The Linggadjati Agreement, which had been initialled in Batavia in November 1946 under British auspices, was signed by Dutch and Indonesians in March 1947. The Indonesian Republic was recognized as exercising de facto authority over Java, Madura and Sumatra. The Dutch and Republican Governments were to co-operate in the setting up of a federal state, to be known as the United States of Indonesia. A Netherlands–Indonesian Union was also to be established. This was to consist on the one hand of the Netherlands, with Surinam and Curacao and, on the other, of the United States of Indonesia. This Union was to be under the Dutch Crown. Hope was expressed that the United States of Indonesia and the Netherlands–Indonesian Union would be established by 1 January 1949.[8] In reality, the Linggadjati agreement was vague and aspirational. Misunderstanding between the two sides soon emerged. In July 1947, in a bid to strengthen the Dutch negotiating position, Van Mook dispensed with the agreement and embarked on a policy of military aggression. Using the bridgeheads that the British had secured and then handed over, Dutch armoured formations fanned out across Java and Sumatra, driving Indonesian forces before them. But British recognition of the Indonesian Republic, at the local and national level, had bequeathed to it a moral legitimacy in the eyes of the world. International protest at Dutch actions was immediate and a halt was called to the military advance. Then followed further negotiations, these too ending in failure. When, in a last bid to defeat the Republic, the Dutch launched a second military action at the end of 1948, capturing Yogyakarta, the Republican capital, and imprisoning many of the Republican leaders, including Sukarno, the international outcry was so great that the Dutch were obliged to promise to leave the Indies by 1950. In the event, they left at the end of 1949. Indonesian independence, initially proclaimed in August 1945, had become a reality.

APPENDIX 1

Structure of Indian divisions in Indonesia

Diagram 1: Composition of 23rd Indian Division in October 1945

23rd Indian Division
(Commanded by Major-General Hawthorn)

1st Indian Infantry Brigade	37th Indian Infantry Brigade	Royal Artillery Brigade	49th Indian Infantry Brigade
(Brigadier King)	(Brigadier Macdonald)	(Brigadier Bethell)	(Brigadier Mallaby)
1/16th Punjab	3/3rd Gurkha Rifles	6/8th Punjab Machine-Gun Battalion	4/5th Mahrattas
1st Patialas	3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles	2/19th Hyderabad	6/5th Mahrattas
1st Seaforth Highlanders	3/10th Gurkha Rifles	5/8th Punjab	5/6th Rajputana Rifles

Royal Artillery Brigade in 23rd Indian Division

A Division normally consisted of three Brigades. Royal Artillery Brigade was formed as an extra Brigade in response to the need to deploy more Brigade formations throughout Java. For the purposes of forming the Brigade, battalions were used which made up the Divisional Infantry. 6/8th Punjab, which was a

Machine-Gun Battalion, would normally have been spread out among 1st, 37th and 49th Indian Infantry Brigades. Similarly, 2/19th Hyderabad was the Divisional Headquarters Battalion with responsibility for protecting Divisional Headquarters and 5/8th Punjab was the Reconnaissance Battalion.

Diagram 2: Composition of 26th Indian Division in October 1945

26th Indian Division
(Commanded by Major-General Chambers)

4th Indian Infantry Brigade	Royal Artillery Brigade	71st Indian Infantry Brigade
(Brigadier Forman)	(Brigadier Kelly)	(Brigadier Hutchinson)
2/7th Rajputs	1st Lincolns	6/6th Rajputana Rifles
8/8th Punjab	12/13th Frontier Force Rifles Machine-Gun Battalion	6th South Wales Borderers
2/13th Frontier Force Rifles	2nd Patialas	1/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles

Royal Artillery Brigade in 26th Indian Division

As in 23rd Indian Division, this was a Brigade formed out of Divisional Infantry Battalions. 6/6th Rajputana Rifles was normally the Divisional Headquarters Battalion, 2nd Patialas was normally the Reconnaissance Battalion and 12/13th Frontier Force Rifles was normally the Divisional Machine-Gun Battalion.

Diagram 3: Composition of 5th Indian Division in October 1945

5th Indian Division
(Commanded by Major-General Mansergh)

9th Indian Infantry Brigade	123rd Indian Infantry Brigade	161st Indian Infantry Brigade
(Brigadier Brain)	(Brigadier Denholm Young)	(Brigadier Grimshaw)
2nd West Yorks	2/1st Punjab	1/1st Punjab
3/2nd Punjab	1/17th Dogras	4/7th Rajputs
1st Burma Regiment	3/9th Gurkha Rifles	3/4th Gurkha Rifles

Divisional Artillery, under Brigadier Loder-Symonds

Divisional Infantry

17th Dogra Machine-Gun Battalion
1/3rd Madras Regiment (HQ Battalion)
3/9th Jat Regiment (Reconnaissance Battalion)

Notes

Numbering of divisions and brigades

Divisions and brigades were numbered arbitrarily. The existence of 23rd Indian Division did not mean that there were 23 Divisions in the Indian Army. Similarly, the existence of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade did not mean that there were 49 brigades in the Indian Army.

Organisation of the Indian Army

There were 20 infantry Regiments in the Indian Army, each Regiment consisting of a number of battalions. A battalion would normally contain about 800 men. The Regiments would recruit in different areas of India. With reference to Diagram 1, the 19th Regiment in the Indian Army was the Hyderabad Regiment. 2/19th Hyderabad was therefore the 2nd battalion of the 19th Regiment in the Indian Army, known as 19th Hyderabad Regiment. In some cases, there was more than one Regiment in a particular area. For example, there were six Punjab Regiments,

namely 1st, 2nd, 8th, 14th, 15th and 16th Punjab, each containing a number of battalions. The number of battalions within the different Regiments varied, but was usually between four and six.

Organisation of Gurkha Regiments

Gurkha Regiments were organised separately from the Indian Army but were part of this Army. There were in all 10 Gurkha Regiments, each containing a number of battalions. With reference to Diagram 1, 3/3rd Gurkhas was the 3rd battalion of the 3rd Gurkha Regiment, otherwise known as 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles.

Organisation of brigades and divisions

Regiments were not fighting units. Instead, the battalions in each Regiment would be allotted to different Brigades. A Brigade typically consisted of three or four infantry battalions. In turn, a Division typically consisted of three or four Brigades. Brigades were commanded by Brigadiers; Divisions were commanded by Major-Generals. Within the Divisions, there were artillery and engineering units which would be allotted to each Brigade.

The British and Indian Armies

Great Britain and India were both responsible for raising troops during the Second World War. The expansion of the British Army was achieved by conscription; the expansion of the Indian Army went ahead on a voluntary basis. As has been explained above, there were 20 Regiments in the Indian Army. These Regiments recruited Indians for their battalions but these battalions were commanded for the most part by British officers. By 1945, there were many Indian officers in Indian Army battalions. Indian officers often accounted for a third or even half of the officers in an Indian Army battalion and in some cases the Commanding Officer of a battalion was an Indian. This was all part of the process of 'Indianization' of the Indian Army which had been begun in the 1930s in preparation for Indian self-government. Gurkha battalions were at this stage still commanded entirely by British officers. Indian State Forces, of which 1st Patialas is an example, were not part of the Indian Army. They had been raised by the Indian Princely Rulers as a contribution to the Allied war effort and were commanded by Indian officers who had been trained by the British. 1st Patialas had been raised by the Maharajah of Patiala. The British Army also contained regiments which recruited in certain areas and which were made up of a number of battalions. With reference to Diagram 1, 1st Seaforth Highlanders was the 1st battalion of the Seaforth Highland Regiment. At the Regimental level, the British and Indian Armies recruited separately, but Indian Infantry Brigades were supposed to contain one British Army battalion and two Indian Army battalions. This was a result of thinking on the part of the

British in India which dated back to the Mutiny-Rebellion of 1857: the British sought to ensure the loyalty of Indian Army battalions by brigading them with a British Army battalion. By October 1945, however, the repatriation of British personnel meant that many British Army battalions had to be disbanded and their places in the Indian Infantry Brigades were filled by Indian or Gurkha battalions. This explains why 1st Seaforth Highlanders was the only British battalion in 23rd Indian Division by the time the Division arrived in Java.

APPENDIX 2

Typical brigade headquarters

Brigadier

Second-in-Command
(a Colonel)

Brigade Major
(The Senior Staff Officer. He would have been to Staff College for six months. He would have been a regular soldier and would have had a lot of experience)

DAA
(Deputy Assistant Adjutant. He ordered ammunition.)

QMG
(Quartermaster General. He ordered food and equipment.)

Intelligence Officer

Liaison Officers from the battalions making up the Brigade

Brigade Orderly Officer
(Responsible for the defence of Brigade Headquarters and for organizing the mess)

Transport Officer

Signals Officer

Clerks

APPENDIX 3

Typical structure of a battalion

Battalion

'A' Company	'B' Company	'C' Company	'D' Company	Headquarters Company
1st Platoon	2nd Platoon	3rd Platoon	Company Headquarters	
1st Section	2nd Section	3rd Section		

Notes

Ranks held by Commanders at the various levels of a battalion

A battalion was commanded by a Lieutenant-Colonel. A full Colonel either held a staff position or was Second-in-Command of a Brigade. A Company was commanded by a Major. A Platoon was commanded by a Viceroy's-commissioned officer holding the rank of either Subedar (Lieutenant) or Jemedar (2nd Lieutenant). Sections were commanded either by a Naik (an Indian Corporal) or a Lance-Naik (an Indian Lance-Corporal).

APPENDIX 4

Chronology of the British Occupation of Indonesia, April 1945–November 1946

1945

April: American Chiefs of Staff first suggest that the Netherlands East Indies and French Indochina south of the 16th parallel be transferred from General MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area to Admiral Mountbatten's Southeast Asia Command.

July: American request renewed at the Potsdam Conference. Mountbatten asks for time to consider the implications of the transfer of responsibility.

14 August: Surrender of Japan. Southeast Asia Command gains immediate responsibility for the new territories.

17 August: Proclamation of Indonesian independence in Batavia. Sukarno and Hatta inaugurated as President and Vice-President.

2 September: MacArthur accepts the surrender of the Japanese in Tokyo Bay.

4 September: Decision that the Anglo–Dutch Civil Affairs Agreement worked out for Sumatra will apply to all areas of the Netherlands East Indies occupied by British forces.

8 September: First RAPWI teams dropped on Batavia.

9 September: British landings on the west coast of Malaya, Operation 'Zipper'.

12 September: Mountbatten accepts the surrender of the Japanese in Singapore.

15 September: Arrival of No. 6 RAPWI Control Staff at Tandjoengpriok, the port of Batavia, on board HMS *Cumberland*.

18 September: RAPWI team dropped on Magelang in Central Java. Despatch of thousands of internees from the camps in Central Java to Surabaya during this point and throughout October. RAPWI teams also dropped on Sumatra during September. Rear-Admiral Patterson, on board HMS *Cumberland*, stresses that Allied troops must arrive soon to stop the situation 'getting out of hand'.

19 September: RAPWI team dropped on Surabaya.

22 September: Lieutenant-General Christison appointed Commander Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies.

28 September: Decision by Mountbatten to limit the scope of the British occupation of the Indies. Occupation force will now confine itself to 'key areas'.

29 September: Arrival of 1st Seaforth Highlanders, the first formation of 23rd Indian Division, at Batavia. Christison arrives the same evening. Additional formations follow over the next few days.

1 October: General Christison gives '*de facto*' recognition to the Indonesian Republic.

4 October: 1st Indian Infantry Brigade assumes responsibility for 'law and order' in Batavia.

8 October: First British fatality in the Indies: a private in the Seaforth Highlanders is killed on the streets of Batavia.

10 October: Christison posts the KNIL and other Dutch troops to the south of Batavia. British forces arrive at Medan and Padang on Sumatra.

17 October: Arrival of British forces at Buitenzorg, West Java.

18 October: Arrival of British forces at Bandung, West Java.

19 October: Arrival of British forces at Semarang, Central Java.

20 October: Despatch of a force to Ambarawa and Magelang, in the interior of Central Java.

25 October: Arrival of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade at Surabaya. (For events in Surabaya from this date until the end of November, see Appendix 5, 'Chronology of events in Surabaya: 25 October – 29 November 1945'.) British forces arrive at Palembang in southern Sumatra.

Late October and early November: Four more Indian Army battalions arrive at Medan, northern Sumatra.

31 October: Irregular Indonesian forces attack British positions in Magelang.

2 November: Arrival of Brigadier Bethell and Sukarno in Magelang to try and calm the situation.

17 November: Outbreak of hostilities in Semarang.

19 November: Sjahrir orders all regular and irregular Indonesian troops to leave Batavia.

20 November: Outbreak of fighting at Ambarawa.

21 November: British garrison and remaining internees evacuate Magelang, withdrawing to Ambarawa.

25 November: Dakota carrying 20 troops of 2/19th Hyderabad crash lands near Bekasi. Survivors killed by an Indonesian group known as the 'Banteng Hitam', or 'Black Buffaloes'.

29 November: 'Black Buffaloes' killed in a battle with British forces near Bekasi.

1 December: Discovery of grave containing victims of crashed Dakota.

4 December: Disappearance of the Brigade Major of 71st Indian Infantry Brigade and a woman Red Cross worker in Padang, Sumatra.

6 December: British venture into south Bandung to rescue refugees. 'Clearing operations' undertaken in north Bandung during late December.

8 December: Last internees evacuated from Ambarawa. 36th Indian Infantry Brigade Headquarters set up in Governor General's Palace at Buitenzorg after the British force their way in and eject the Indonesian Resident.

13 December: Bekasi burnt down on the orders of General Christison.

14 December: British garrison evacuates Ambarawa.

25 December: British venture into south Bandung to collect members of the Chinese community who wish to live under British protection.

27 December: British launch Operation 'Pounce' in Batavia.

1946

January: British negotiate with Indonesian Government to arrange the evacuation of internees in the interior of Java. Evacuation to be by train.

4 January: Landing at Batavia of a Dutch European battalion to replace Ambonese troops.

20 February: Beginning of attempts by armed Indonesians to infiltrate into north Bandung.

March: 'Social Revolution' in the East Coast Residencies of northern Sumatra. Many Sultans deposed and killed.

9 March: Landing of large contingents of Dutch troops in West, Central and East Java. Indonesian ambush of a patrol of 2/13 Frontier Force Rifles in the Medan area of Sumatra.

15 March: 1st Lincolns move from Padang to Palembang.

25 March: British troops occupy south Bandung.

30 March: Indonesian ambush of a patrol of 1st Lincolns in Palembang.

April: New British negotiations with the Indonesian Government for evacuation of internees by air. Visit to Sumatra of Sjarifoedin, Indonesian Minister of Defence.

1 April: Arrival of first contingent of Dutch troops in Bandung.

12 April: Decision at a meeting between members of the British and Dutch Governments in London that British troops will remain in Indonesia until their relief at the end of the year by Dutch forces.

15 April: Dutch troops occupy Pesing in the Batavia area in contravention of British orders.

May: New Government elected in The Netherlands.

4 May: 36th Indian Infantry Brigade sails for India.

12 May: Last British troops withdraw from Surabaya.

17 May: Last British troops withdraw from Semarang.

20 May: Beginning of airlift of internees from the interior of Java. This continues until 23 July.

Late May: Dutch troops occupy Tangerang. Indonesian 'extremists' carry out massacre of Chinese community in the town by way of retaliation.

18 June: Dutch troops occupy Balaradja in the Batavia area in contravention of British orders.

26 June: Last British troops leave Bandung.

August: Decision by the British that all their troops will leave Indonesia by 30 November 1946.

17 August: British ban celebration of Indonesian 'Independence Day' in the areas they control in Java and Sumatra.

29 August: British issue orders restricting military activity in an attempt to ease Allied-Indonesian tension so that political negotiations between Dutch and Indonesians may have a better chance of success.

3 September: Lord Killearn negotiates with the Indonesian Government the evacuation of internees and other pro-Allied individuals from the interior of Java by train.

10 September: 49th Indian Infantry Brigade sails for Malaya.

18 September: Arrival of Dutch Commission-General in Batavia. Dutch–Indonesian political discussions begin under the auspices of Lord Killearn.

27 September: Evacuation begins of remaining internees in the interior of Java.

14 October: Military truce signed by British, Dutch and Indonesian representatives. It is only partly successful.

24 October: British hand Buitenzorg over to the Dutch.

Late October: Dutch troops begin the relief of British troops in Medan, Padang and Palembang on Sumatra.

9 November: British troops leave Palembang, Sumatra.

15 November: Initialling of the Linggadjati Agreement at Batavia by Dutch and Indonesian representatives.

21 November: 4th Indian Infantry Brigade leaves Medan, Sumatra.

27 November: 37th Indian Infantry Brigade sails for Malaya. Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies hands over command to Headquarters Royal Netherlands Indian Army.

28 November: British troops leave Padang, Sumatra.

29 November: Last British troops leave the Indies.

30 November: South East Asia Command ceases to exist.

APPENDIX 5

Chronology of events in Surabaya, 25 October – 29 November 1945

25 October
Early morning: arrival off Surabaya of HMS *Waveney* with Brigadier Mallaby and Captain Macdonald, Brigade Intelligence Officer, on board. Macdonald sent into Surabaya. Meets Moestopo, head of the local TKR, and Soerio, Indonesian Governor of East Java.
Afternoon: first troops of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade landed at 3.15pm Occupation of key points in the city.
Evening: meeting betweeen Colonel Pugh, Second-in-Command of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, and Moestopo. Meeting between Mallaby and Moestopo arranged for the following day.

26 October
Morning: meeting between Mallaby and Moestopo. Agreement reached on the question of disarmament.
Afternoon: message received from Major-General Hawthorn, Commander of 23rd Indian Division, not to 'parley' but to occupy the city.

Leaflets dropped over West and Central Java requesting all Indonesians to hand in arms within 24 hours or be shot.

Signal sent to Divisional Headquarters asking for leaflets not to be dropped over Surabaya.

27 October
Morning: same leaflets dropped over Surabaya. Meeting between Mallaby and Moestopo at which Mallaby states he must carry out orders from Divisional Headquarters. Moestopo subsequently disappears. Indonesians begin preparations for armed conflict.
Night of 27–28 October: anti-British propaganda broadcast by Indonesian-controlled radio station in Surabaya.

28 October
Morning: landing of 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry and dispersal throughout the city. British requisitioning of Indonesian cars. British begin evacuation of internees from camp at Goebeng to Dharmo.

Afternoon: outbreak of fighting at 4.20pm. British positions attacked. Internee convoy ambushed.

29 October
Continuation of fighting all over Surabaya. At Christison's request, Sukarno goes to Surabaya. He and Mallaby agree a truce but it is only partially successful.

30 October
Arrival of Hawthorn in Surabaya. Sukarno, Hawthorn and Mallaby agree that 49th Indian Infantry Brigade must re-group. Return of Sukarno and Hawthorn to Batavia.
Evening: Mallaby killed while trying to implement the ceasefire. Escape of two Staff Officers who are with him. Command of the Brigade devolves on Pugh.

31 October
Implementation of truce agreement. 49th Indian Infantry Brigade re-grouped to north and south of Surabaya. Beginning of movement of internees to the port from where they can be evacuated.

1 November
First formations of 5th Indian Division begin to land.

3 November
Indonesians return captured British and Indian personnel.

6 November
6,050 internees have been evacuated from Surabaya by this stage.

7 November
Meeting between Major-General Mansergh, Commander of 5th Indian Division, and Soerio. Attempt to get Soerio to agree to return of captured personnel and vehicles and handover of airfield to the British.

8 November
Deterioration of relations between Mansergh and Soerio. Soerio refuses a further meeting with Mansergh and denies there is a 'law and order' problem in Surabaya. British are resolved on military action by this stage.

9 November
Last attempt to contact Soerio. Leaflets dropped on Surabaya demanding return of captured personnel and disarmament of Indonesian civilians. Indonesians given until 6.00pm that evening to comply with demands. Occupation and search of the city threatened if demands not met.

10 November
British launch reoccupation of Surabaya. 3,500 internees found by the advancing British forces.

29 November
British reoccupation of Surabaya complete.

APPENDIX 6

Dramatis personæ

Indonesians

Roeslan **Abdulgani**. 'Moderate' Indonesian leader in Surabaya.

Djamaluddin **Adinegoro**. Leading nationalist figure on Sumatra. A close relation of Dr Amir. Had worked as a journalist before the war.

Dr Mohammad **Amir**. Personal physician to the Sultan of Langkat. A leading nationalist figure in northern Sumatra.

Doel **Arnowo**. 'Moderate' Indonesian leader in Surabaya.

Barioen. Editor of *Oetoesan Soematera*, a radical Indonesian newspaper based in Padang.

Resident **Barnas**. Indonesian Resident of Buitenzorg.

Sultan of **Deli**. Hereditary ruler of the Sultanate of Deli on the northeast coast of Sumatra. One of the few Sultans to survive the 'Social Revolution' of March 1946.

Major-General **Didi**. Succeeded Abdul Kadir as Commander of the TKR in West Java in January 1946.

Dr **Djamil**. Indonesian Resident of Padang.

Soeleimann **Effendi**. Indonesian nationalist leader in Padang.

Enoh. Chief of the Indonesian Republican police in Buitenzorg.

Dr A. K. **Gani**. Prominent Indonesian nationalist leader. Head of the Partai Nasional Indonesia.

Gaus. Representative of the Central Government of the Indonesian Republic in Buitenzorg.

Mohammad **Hassan**. Indonesian Republican Governor of Sumatra.

Mohammad **Hatta**. Born in Sumatra, 1902. Studied in the Netherlands, 1922–32. Was President of the Indonesian Union, a progressive, nationalist political group

founded by overseas Indonesian students. Arrested by the Dutch in 1934 for his political activities and sent to a concentration camp in West New Guinea. Exiled to the island of Bandanaira in 1935. Transported back to Java by the Dutch, 1942. Collaborated with the Japanese occupation force during the Second World War, in conjunction with Sukarno. Proclaimed Indonesian independence, along with Sukarno, on 17 August 1945. Served as Vice-President in the subsequent revolutionary government. Also served as Prime Minister, 1948–50. Resigned as Vice-President in 1956 on account of disagreements with Sukarno over economic policy. Emerged from retirement after Suharto's seizure of power in 1965, whom he served as special advisor on the problem of government corruption. Died 1980.

Colonel **Hussain**. Head of the TKR in Buitenzorg.

Idham. Indonesian Republican leader in Buitenzorg. Responsible for liaison with Allied forces.

Colonel Abdul **Kadir**. Head of the TKR in West Java until January 1946.

Saudara **Kundan**. Leader of the Indian community in Surabaya.

Sultan of **Langkat**. One of the Sultans of the Residencies of the North East Coast of Sumatra. Lost his throne during the 'Social Revolution' of March 1946 but was not killed.

Tan **Malaka**. Prominent Indonesian nationalist between the wars. Founder of the 'Persatuan Perdjuangan', or 'Struggle Union', after the war.

Dr **Moestopo**. Head of the TKR in Surabaya.

Rasjid. Indonesian nationalist leader in Padang.

Soetan **Sjahrir**. Born in Sumatra, 1909. Studied in the Netherlands where he was secretary of the Indonesian Union, a progressive, nationalist, political group founded by overseas Indonesian students. Returned to the Dutch East Indies in 1931 where he became active in nationalist politics. Arrested by the Dutch in 1934 on account of his political activities and sent to a concentration camp in West New Guinea. Subsequently exiled to the island of Bandanaira where he resided with Hatta. Flown back to Java by the Dutch in 1942. Was opposed to the Japanese when they occupied Java but chose to withdraw from public life rather than resist. Published an influential nationalist pamphlet, entitled 'Our Struggle', in 1945, which earned him widespread support from nationalists. Appointed Prime Minister in the revolutionary government. Negotiated the Linggadjati Agreement with the Dutch in 1946, whereby the latter acknowledged the authority of the Indonesian Republic in Java and Sumatra. His conciliatory stance brought him into conflict with radical nationalists, a conflict which obliged him to resign the premiership briefly in 1946 and then permanently in 1947, the year the Dutch launched their first 'police action' against the Republic. Became a member of the Indonesian delegation to the United Nations following the formal transfer of sovereignty by

the Dutch in 1949. Founded the Indonesian Socialist Party in 1948 in opposition to the Indonesian Communist Party. This failed to obtain support and was banned by Sukarno in 1960. Arrested on charges of conspiracy in 1962 and held without charge until 1965, when he was permitted to travel to Switzerland for medical treatment having suffered a stroke. Died 1966 in Zürich.

Amir **Sjarifoedin**. Indonesian Minister of Defence in the Sjahrir cabinet.

Dirman **Soedirman**. 'Moderate' Indonesian leader in Surabaya.

General **Soedirman**. Commander of the TRI.

Dr **Soerio**. Indonesian Republican Governor of East Java.

Dr **Sugiri**. A representative of Dr Moestopo.

Dr Ahmed **Sukarno**. Born in Java, 1901. Emerged as a leading nationalist in the 1920s. Imprisoned by the Dutch in Bandung for his political activities, 1929–31. Exiled first in Flores then in Sumatra, 1933–42. Collaborated with the Japanese occupation forces during the Second World War, in conjunction with Hatta. Proclaimed Indonesian independence, along with Hatta, on 17 August 1945. Served as President in the subsequent revolutionary government. Moved from Yogyakarta to Jakarta with the formal Dutch transfer of sovereignty, 1949. Instituted a more authoritarian form of rule, termed 'Guided Democracy', from 1956. Withdrew Indonesia from the United Nations in 1965 on account of the latter's support for Malaysia in the dispute over the recently independent territories in northern Borneo. Widely thought to have been implicated in the ill-fated communist coup of 1965. Lost power to General Suharto, commander of the Jakarta garrison, who reversed the coup and unleashed widespread slaughter of suspected communists. Sukarno delegated extensive powers to Suharto in 1966, the latter becoming Acting President in 1967 and President in 1968. Marginalized and discredited towards the end of his life, Sukarno died in 1970

Sungkono. 'Moderate' Indonesian leader in Surabaya.

Wonsonogoro. Indonesian Republican Governor of Central Java.

Youssouf. Leading Indonesian nationalist in Medan. A lawyer by profession.

Japanese

Vice-Admiral **Hirose**. Senior Japanese naval officer on Sumatra.

Major **Kido**. Commander of the Kido Butai, a Japanese battalion stationed in Central Java.

Lieutenant-General **Nagano**. Commander of Japanese 16th Army on Java.

Captain Hiro **Namazura**. Artillery officer who worked with the British in West Java.

Lieutenant-General **Tanabe**. Commander of Japanese 25th Army on Sumatra.

Captain **Yamada**. Commander of a company of the Kido Butai.

Indians

Sarat Chandra **Bose**. Member of the Indian National Congress and the Indian National Assembly. Brother of Subhas Chandra Bose.

Subhas Chandra **Bose**. Born 1897. Studied first at Calcutta and then at Cambridge, where he prepared for the Indian Civil Service exams. Returned to India in 1921 on learning of the nationalist agitation there. Became involved in nationalist activity in Bengal under the direction of Gandhi and was imprisoned by the British. Appointed chief executive officer of the corporation of Calcutta in 1924. Deported to Burma by the British that same year on account of suspicions that he had connections with secret revolutionary movements. Released in 1927. Returned to Bengal and was elected President of the Bengal Congress. Detained by the British on numerous occasions during the 1930s. Elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1938. Arrested by the British in 1940 but released after threatening to fast to death. Travelled to Berlin via Kabul and Moscow in 1941. Travelled to Tokyo in 1943 and, with Japanese assistance, raised an Indian National Army and proclaimed a provisional, independent Indian government. Attempted to flee to Japan following the Japanese surrender in August 1945. Reported to have died in a Japanese hospital in Taiwan having been burnt in an air crash.

Mohandas Karamchand **Gandhi.** Born 1869. Went to England in 1888 to undertake legal studies. Went to South Africa in 1893 to practise as a lawyer. Became involved in protest against the racist treatment of the Indian community by the white administration, for which he was imprisoned. Arrived back in India in 1915. Entered politics in 1919 to protest against British sedition laws. Emerged as the figurehead of the Indian nationalist movement and its political party, the Indian National Congress. Advocated a policy of non-violent non-co-operation to achieve Indian self-rule. Suffered periods of imprisonment during the 1920s and 1930s and during the latter part of the Second World War. Remained a figurehead during the complex political negotiations in the period 1945–47 which led to independence and the partition of the Indian subcontinent. Attempted to stem the rising tide of Hindu–Muslim communal violence by fasting to death. Assassinated in 1948 by a Hindu extremist, who resented what he saw as Gandhi's indulgent attitude towards Muslims. Widely perceived as the father of modern India and as the founder of the doctrine of non-violent protest to achieve political and social progress.

Mohammad Ali **Jinnah**. Born 1876. Went to England to study for the bar exams, 1892. Called to the bar, 1895. Returned to India, 1896. Entered politics by participating in the 1906 Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress. Elected to the Imperial Legislative Council, 1910, under the terms of the Government of India Act of the previous year. Left the Indian National Congress in 1920 on account

of opposition to Gandhi's political methods and his seemingly Hindu vision of India's future. Went to London, 1930–35, to practise before the Privy Council. Returned to India following the passing of the 1935 Government of India Act. Emerged as the leader of Indian Muslim opinion during the late 1930s, these being particularly fearful of their future in a Hindu-dominated India, a fear which manifested itself in the 1940 Lahore resolution for the creation of Pakistan, a Muslim homeland. In his capacity as leader of the Muslim League, Jinnah took part in the complex political negotiations of 1945–47 with the British and Congress which led to the creation of the independent Muslim state of Pakistan in 1947. Became Head of State of Pakistan. Died 1948.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sarbjit Singh **Kalha**. Commander of 2/1st Punjab.

Charman **Lal**. Member of the Indian National Congress and the Indian Legislative Assembly.

Jawaharlal **Nehru**. Born 1889. Educated at Harrow, 1905–07. Studied Natural Science at Cambridge, 1907–10. Studied for the bar exams at the Inner Temple, London, 1910–12. Returned to India immediately thereafter. Met Gandhi in 1916 and became actively involved in politics from 1919 onwards. Elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1929. Suffered nine separate periods of detention by the British between 1921 and 1945. Toured Europe and the Soviet Union, 1926–27. On being released from his longest period of imprisonment in 1945, took part in the complex political negotiations which were to lead to independence in 1947. Appointed head of an interim government by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in 1946. Became Prime Minister of independent India, 1947. Pursued, with varying degrees of success, a foreign policy of non-alignment over the following years. Died 1964.

American

General Douglas **MacArthur**. Born 1880. Chief of Staff, US Army, 1930–35. Military advisor to the Government of the Philippines, 1935–41. C-in-C, South West Pacific Area, 1941–45. Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Japan, 1945–50. C-in-C, UN Forces in Korea, 1950–51. Died 1964.

General **Marshall**. Born 1880. Chief of Staff, US Army, 1939–45. Secretary of State, 1947–49. Formulated Marshall Plan for the reconstruction and relief of Europe. Secretary of Defence, 1950–51. Died 1959.

Dutch

Lieutenant-Commander **Brondgeest**. Dutch member of Force 136. Undertook intelligence work prior to the arrival of the British on Sumatra.

Colonel **De Waal**. Commander of 'U' Regimental Group, based in the Batavia area, one of whose battalions carried out the attack on Pesing in April 1946.

Admiral **Helfrich**. Commander of Dutch forces in the Indies until January 1946.

Captain **Huijer**. Dutch naval officer who took the surrender of Japanese forces in Surabaya in September 1945.

Her Majesty Queen **Juliana**. Queen of the Netherlands from 1948.

Professor **Logemann**. Dutch Minister of Overseas Territories in the Schermerhorn Government.

Colonel **Meyer**. Commander of 'V' Regimental Group which began the relief of the British garrison in Bandung in April 1946.

Baron C. G. W. H. van Boetzelaer van **Oosterhout**. Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1947.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Pel**. Senior Dutch liaison officer on Sumatra.

Lieutenant-General W. **Schilling**. Commanded a detachment of the KNIL to the south of Batavia during the autumn of 1945.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. **Sluyter**. Commander of the Dutch battalion which attacked Pesing in the Batavia area in April 1946.

Lieutenant-General **Spoor**. C-in-C of the KNIL. Senior Dutch commander in the Indies from January 1946.

Charles O. **Van der Plas**. A senior Dutch colonial official before the war. Subordinate to Dr Van Mook during the British occupation.

Colonel **Van Langen**. Commander of 'T' Regimental Group which relieved the British in Central Java.

Dr Hubertus J. **Van Mook**. Lieutenant-Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies.

General **Van Oyen**. Commander of the KNIL until January 1946.

Major-General **Weijerman**. Member of the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Organisation.

Her Majesty Queen **Wilhelmina**. Queen of The Netherlands until 1948.

British

Field Marshal Lord **Alanbrooke**. Born 1883. Commanded 2nd Army Corps, BEF, 1939–40. C-in-C, Home Forces, 1940–41. Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 1941–46. Died 1963.

Colonel **Armitage**. Officer on the Staff of Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies responsible for liaison with the incoming Dutch forces.

Field-Marshal Sir Claude **Auchinleck**. Born 1884. GOC-in-C, Northern Norway, 1940. GOC-in-C, Southern Command, 1940. C-in-C, India, 1941 and 1943–47. C-in-C, Middle East, 1941–42. Supreme Commander in India and Pakistan, 1947. Died 1981.

The Rt Hon. Jack **Bellinger**. Under-Secretary for War in the Labour Government.

Brigadier **Bethell**. Commander Royal Artillery, 23rd Indian Division.

The Rt Hon. Mr Ernest **Bevin**. Born 1881. General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, 1921–40. Member of the General Council of Trades Union Congress, 1925–40. Minister of Labour and National Service, 1940–45. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1945–51. Died 1951.

Sir Neville **Bland**. British Ambassador at The Hague.

Captain Derek van den Bogaerde, later known as Dirk **Bogarde**. ADC to General Hawthorn. A film star throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

Captain **Bramwell**. Commander of 'D' Company of 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles. Interviewed by the author.

Captain **Burgess**. Intelligence Officer of, successively, 1/8th Gurkha Rifles, until February 1946, 36th Indian Infantry Brigade, from February to May 1946, 37th Indian Infantry Brigade, from May to November 1946. Interviewed by the author.

Lieutenant Tony **Carr**. Intelligence Officer of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles. Interviewed by the author.

Major-General **Chambers**. Commander of 26th Indian Division until January 1946.

Lieutenant-General Sir Philip **Christison**. Born 1893. Commandant of the Staff College at Quetta, 1940–41. Commanded XXXIII and XV Indian Corps in Burma, 1942–45. Temporary Commander of 14th Army and C-in-C, Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, 1945. Allied Commander, Netherlands East Indies, 1945–46. GOC-in-C, Northern Command (UK), 1946. GOC-in-C, Scottish Command, Governor of Edinburgh Castle and ADC General to King George VI, 1947–49. Published *Birds of Northern Baluchistan*, 1940. Died 1993.

The Rt Hon. Mr Winston **Churchill**. Born 1874. Prime Minister of the wartime coalition government, 1940–45, of the Conservative caretaker government, 1945 and of the Conservative government 1951–55. Leader of the Opposition, 1945–51. Died 1965.

Sir Archibald **Clark-Kerr**. Born 1882. Ambassador in Iraq, 1935–38, in China, 1938–42, in the Soviet Union, 1942–46, in the USA, 1946–48. Special British Envoy to Java, 1946. Died 1951.

Major **Coham-Fleming**. Commander of 'A' Company of 6/6th Rajputana Rifles. Interviewed by the author.

The Rt Hon. Sir Stafford **Cripps**. Born 1889. Solicitor-General, 1930–31. British Ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1940–42. Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons, 1942. Minister of Aircraft Production, 1942–45. President of the Board of Trade, 1945. Minister for Economic Affairs, 1947. Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1947–50.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Cruickshank**. Commander of 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry.

Brigadier **Darling**. Commander of 5th Parachute Brigade in Semarang.

The Rt Hon. Harold **Davies**, MP for Leek in Staffordshire. Visited Indonesia at the beginning of 1946.

General Sir Miles **Dempsey**. Took over from General Sir William Slim as Commander Allied Land Forces Southeast Asia in November 1945. Remained in this position until April 1946.

Commodore **De Salis**. Principal Sea Transport Officer at Headquarters Southeast Asia Command.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Doulton**. Officer on the Staff of 23rd Indian Division. Wrote a history of the Division published in 1951.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Doyle**. Commander of 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry. Interviewed by the author.

The Rt Hon. Tom **Driberg**. Back-bench Labour MP.

Captain Gordon **Eadie**. Officer in 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles. Interviewed by the author.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Edwardes**. Commander of 3/10th Gurkha Rifles.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Eggleton**. Worked for the RAPWI Organisation on Java.

Captain **Elliott**. Company Commander in 1/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles. Interviewed by the author.

Brigadier, later Major-General, **Forman**. Commander of 4th Indian Infantry Brigade on Sumatra until May 1946. Was then Chief of Staff at Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies.

Captain **Freeman**. Officer on the Staff of 5th Indian Division. Interviewed by the author.

Lieutenant Ian **Gibb**. Officer in 1st Seaforth Highlanders. Interviewed by the author.

Brigadier **Gibbons**. Director of Civil Administration at Southeast Asia Command Headquarters.

Wing-Commander **Groom**. Prisoner-of-war on Java. On release, worked for the RAPWI Organisation in Central Java.

Colonel **Harrington**. Senior officer on the Staff of 5th Indian Division. Interviewed by the author.

Major-General **Hawthorn**. Born 1897. Assistant Commandant and Chief Instructor at the Tactical School, India, 1941–42. Commanded 62nd Indian Infantry Brigade and served as Chief of Staff of XV Indian Corps during the Burma campaign of 1942–45. Commanded 23rd Indian Division in Malaya and Java. Director of Military Training in India, 1946–47. Deputy Chief of the General Staff to the Supreme Commander, India and Pakistan, 1947. Died 1974.

Major-General **Hedley**. Born 1900. Deputy Assistant Military Secretary at GHQ Middle East, 1941–42. Commanded 2/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, 1942–44. Commanded 48th Indian Infantry Brigade, 1944–45. Served at Headquarters Allied Land Forces Southeast Asia, 1945–46. Commanded 26th Indian Division on Sumatra, 1946. Died 1973.

Major **Henstock**. Commander of 'B' Company of 5/6th Rajputana Rifles. Interviewed by the author.

Major Gil **Hickey**. Commander of 'C' Company of 3/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Hunt**. Senior Intelligence Officer on the Staff of 23rd Indian Division.

Brigadier **Hutchinson**. Commander of 71st Indian Infantry Brigade. Became Commander Padang Area on arriving in Sumatra.

Lieutenant Russell **Jones**. Lieutenant in the Royal Marines. Based in Batavia area in 1946. Interviewed by the author.

Brigadier **Kelly**. Commander Royal Artillery, 26th Indian Division. Commander Medan Area on arriving in Sumatra.

Lord **Killearn**. Born 1880. British Ambassador to Egypt and High Commissioner for the Sudan, 1936–46. Special Commissioner in South East Asia, 1946–48. Died 1964.

Major-General **Kimmins**. Assistant Chief of Staff at Headquarters South East Asia Command.

Brigadier **King**. Commander of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade. Succeeded by Brigadier Wingrove in January 1946.

Major **King Martin**. Brigade Major of 36th Indian Infantry Brigade.

Major **Koder**. Commander of 'C' Company of 6/6th Rajputana Rifles. Interviewed by the author.

Brigadier **Lauder**. Chief of Staff at Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies.

Captain **Laughland**. Liaison Officer of 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry on the Staff of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade. Was with Brigadier Mallaby when the latter was assassinated. Subsequently Brigade Transport Officer. Interviewed by the author.

Captain Ian **Lloyd-Jones**. Officer in 2nd Buffs. Interviewed by the author.

Brigadier **Macdonald**. Commander of 37th Indian Infantry Brigade.

Captain Douglas **Macdonald**. Intelligence Officer of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade. Interviewed by the author.

Major **Mackenzie**. Commander of Force 136.

Gilbert **Mackereth**. British Consul-General in Batavia from February 1946.

Major **Maclagan**. Second-in-Command of 1st Seaforth Highlanders.

Brigadier **Mallaby**. Born 1899. Served at the War Office, 1938–42. Deputy Director of Military Operations, 1941–42. Regimental service in Bengal and Assam with 2nd Punjab and 19th Hyderabad, 1942. Director of Military Operations, GHQ India, 1943–44. Took over command of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, 1945. Assassinated in Surabaya in October of that year.

Major-General **Mansergh**. Born 1900. Served on the Military Mission to Iraq, 1931–35. Served in Eritrea, Abyssinia, the Western Desert, Libya and Persia and in 'Iraq Force' as well as the Arakan, Assam and Burma during the Second World War. Commanded 11th East African Division and then 5th Indian Division on Java, 1945. Commander, XV Indian Corps on Java, 1946. Director of the Territorial Army and Cadets, 1947. Military Secretary to the Secretary of State for War, 1948–49. Commander, British Forces, Hong Kong, 1949–51. Deputy C-in-C, Allied Forces, Northern Europe, 1951–53. C-in-C, Allied Forces, Northern Europe, 1953–56. C-in-C, UK Land Forces and ADC General to the Queen, 1956–59. Died 1970.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Mellsop**. Officer on the Staff of 23rd Indian Division. Promoted to Brigadier and put in command of 36th Indian Infantry Brigade in December 1945. Took command of 4th Indian Infantry Brigade on Sumatra in May 1946.

Lieutenant John **Mohun-Carew**. Intelligence Officer of 3/3rd Gurkha Rifles. Went on to serve as Intelligence Officer of 37th Indian Infantry Brigade. Succeeded in this role by Captain Burgess in May 1946.

Lady Edwina **Mountbatten**. Wife of Admiral Mountbatten. Was active in relief work among prisoners of war and internees after the war.

Vice-Admiral the Earl **Mountbatten** of Burma. Born 1900. Chief of Combined Operations and member of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee, 1942–43. Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia, 1943–46. Viceroy of India, 1947. Governor-General of India, 1947–48. Commanded 1st Cruiser Squadron, Mediterranean Fleet, 1948–49. Fourth Sea Lord, 1950–52. C-in-C, Mediterranean Fleet, 1952–54; concurrently C-in-C, Allied Forces, Mediterranean, 1953–54. First

Sea Lord, 1955–59. Chief of the UK Defence Staff and Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 1959–65. Assassinated by the IRA, 1979.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Nangle**. War Office Liaison Officer. Went on a fact-finding mission to Java at the end of 1945.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Neill**. Commander of 1st Seaforth Highlanders.

Major **Orr**. Second-in-Command of 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry.

Rear-Admiral **Patterson**. Senior Allied representative in the Indies until the arrival of General Christison.

Major **Pearson**. Second-in-Command of 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry.

Lord **Pethick Lawrence**. Secretary of State for India, 1945–47.

Colonel **Pugh**. Born 1907. Entered the Royal Indian Artillery, 1940. Served in the Burma campaign, 1942–45. Served with special forces, 1942–43. Temporary Commander of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade on Java following the assassination of Brigadier Mallaby in October 1945. Commanded 26th Gurkha Infantry Brigade, 1949–52. Deputy Director of Military Operations at the War Office, 1953. Chief of Staff, GHQ Far East, 1956–57. Died 1981.

Lieutenant Dan **Raschen**. Commander of the Mahratta Platoon of 28 Company, Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Ridley**. Officer on the Staff of Headquarters Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies. General Christison's emissary to Mountbatten's Headquarters in December 1945.

Brigadier **Roberts**. Commander of 36th Indian Infantry Brigade until his replacement in December 1945 by Brigadier Mellsop.

Lieutenant-Colonel **Rossier**. Commander of 1st Lincolns.

Major **Russell**. Officer in charge of a Supply Company in Batavia. Second cousin of Sir Stafford Cripps.

Captain **Sayer**, Royal Navy. Commanded the first British convoy that set out from Madras to Sumatra.

Captain **Shaw**. Field Security Officer of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade.

General Sir William **Slim**. Born 1891. Commanded 14th Army in Burma, 1943–45. C-in-C, Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, 1945–46. Commandant, Imperial Defence College, 1946–47. Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 1948–52. Governor-General and C-in-C of Australia, 1953–60. Died 1970.

Captain **Smith**. Liaison officer of 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry on the Staff of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade. Was with Brigadier Mallaby when he was assassinated.

Lieutenant **Snoxall**. Officer who served with 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry. Interviewed by the author.

Lieutenant-General Sir Montagu **Stopford**. Succeeded General Christison as Commander Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies in January 1946. Succeeded General Dempsey as Commander Allied Land Forces South East Asia in April 1946.

John **Sterndale Bennett**. Head of the Far East Department at the Foreign Office.

Captain **Stobie**. Officer on the Staff of 36th Indian Infantry Brigade with responsibility for political intelligence.

Surabaya Sue. A British woman who had been imprisoned during the Japanese occupation of the Indies and had then worked for the Indonesian nationalist movement, broadcasting propaganda from their radio station in Surabaya.

Wing-Commander **Tull**. Head of the RAPWI Organisation in Central Java.

H. F. C. **Walsh**. Foreign Office official and political adviser to Mountbatten.

Major **Ware**. Officer in 2/1st Punjab at the time of its arrival in Surabaya. Briefly commanded the battalion in January 1946.

Field Marshal Viscount **Wavell**. Born 1883. GOC-in-C, Southern Command, 1938–39. C-in-C, Middle East, 1939–41. C-in-C, India, 1941–43. Supreme Commander, South West Pacific, 1942. Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1943–47. Died 1950.

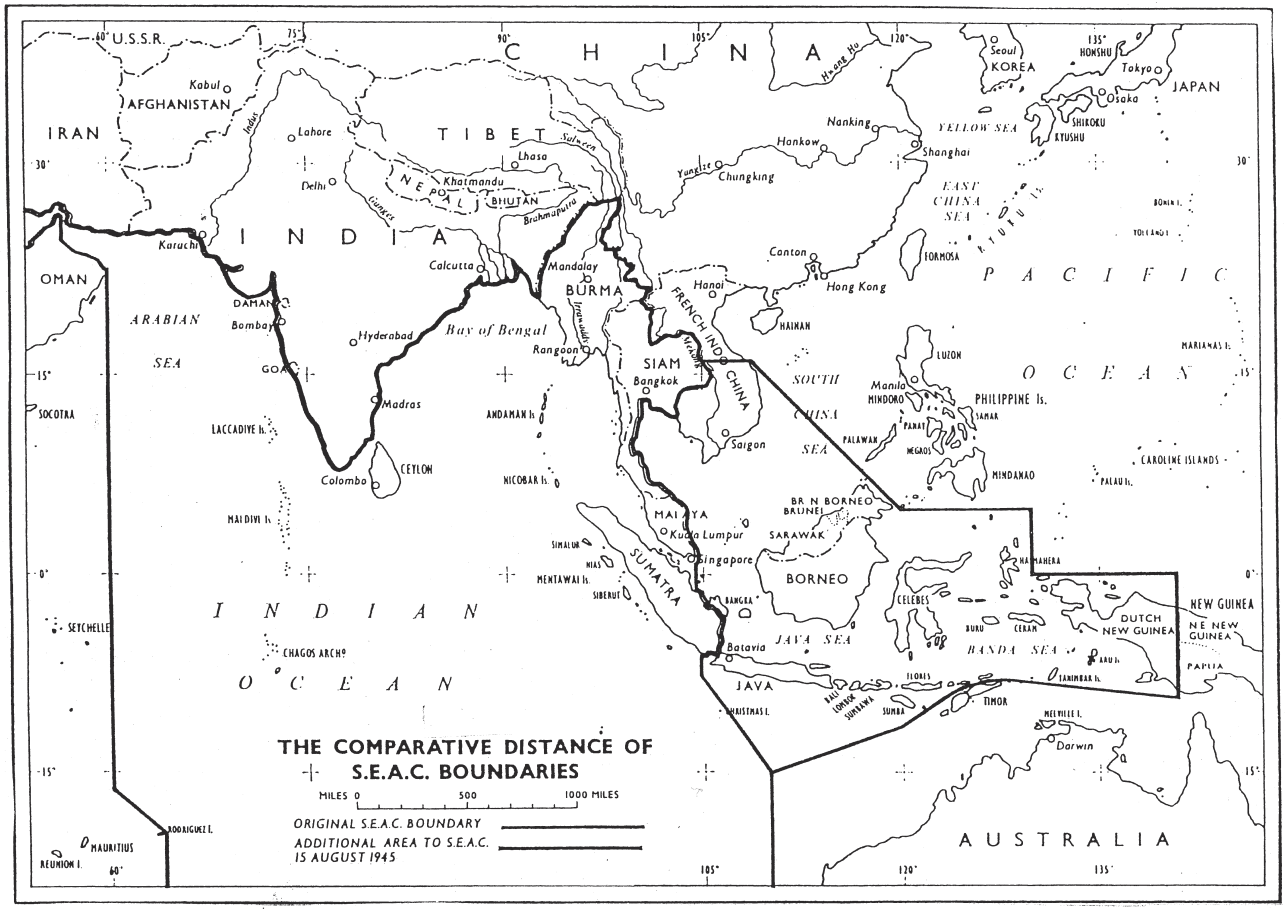
Brigadier **Weston**. Commander of 161st Indian Infantry Brigade.

Major **Wilson**. Commander of 'C' Company of 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry.

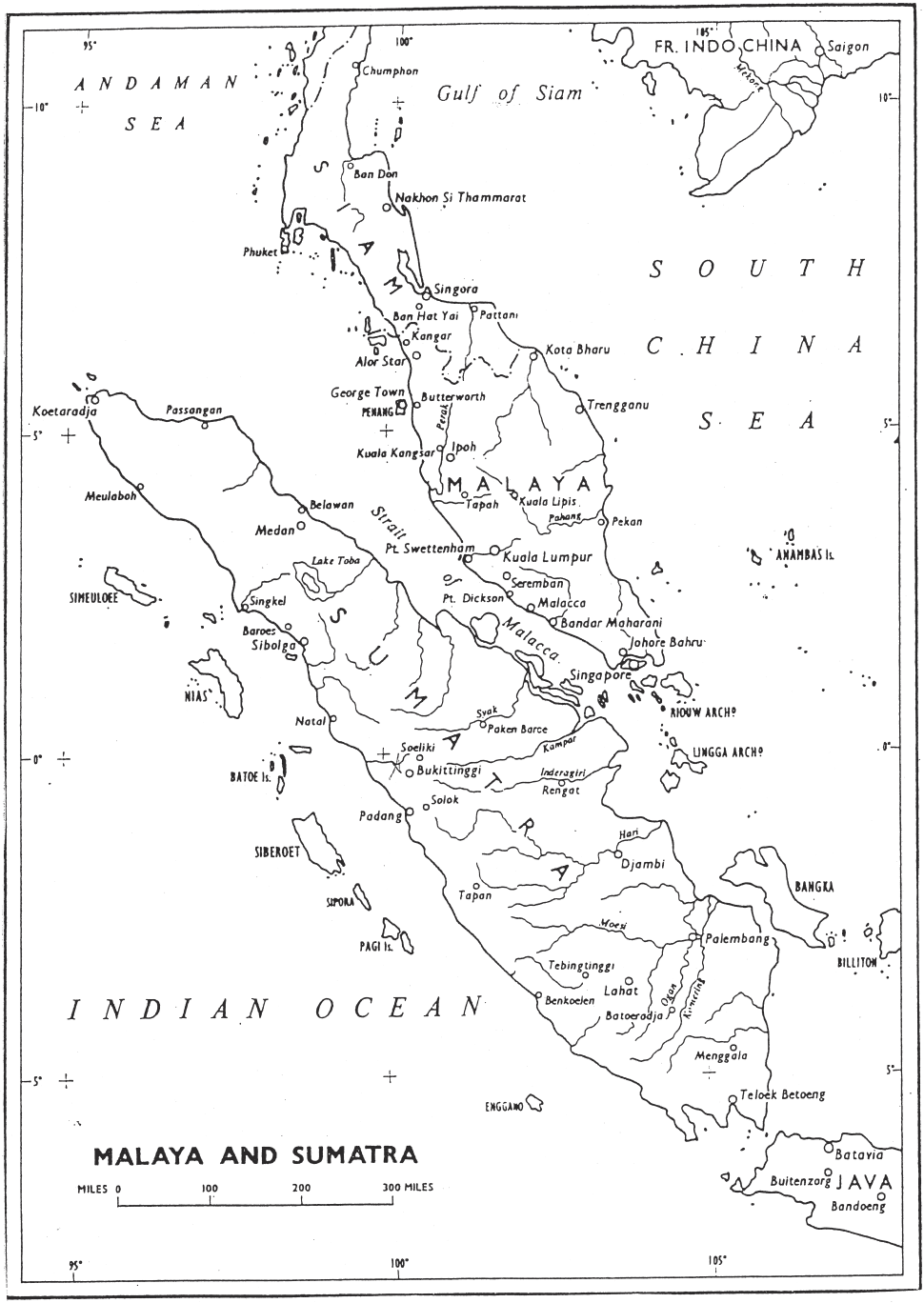
Lieutenant-Colonel **Wilson Haffenden**. Commander of 5/8th Punjab.

Brigadier **Wingrove**. Succeeded Brigadier King as Commander of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade in January 1946.

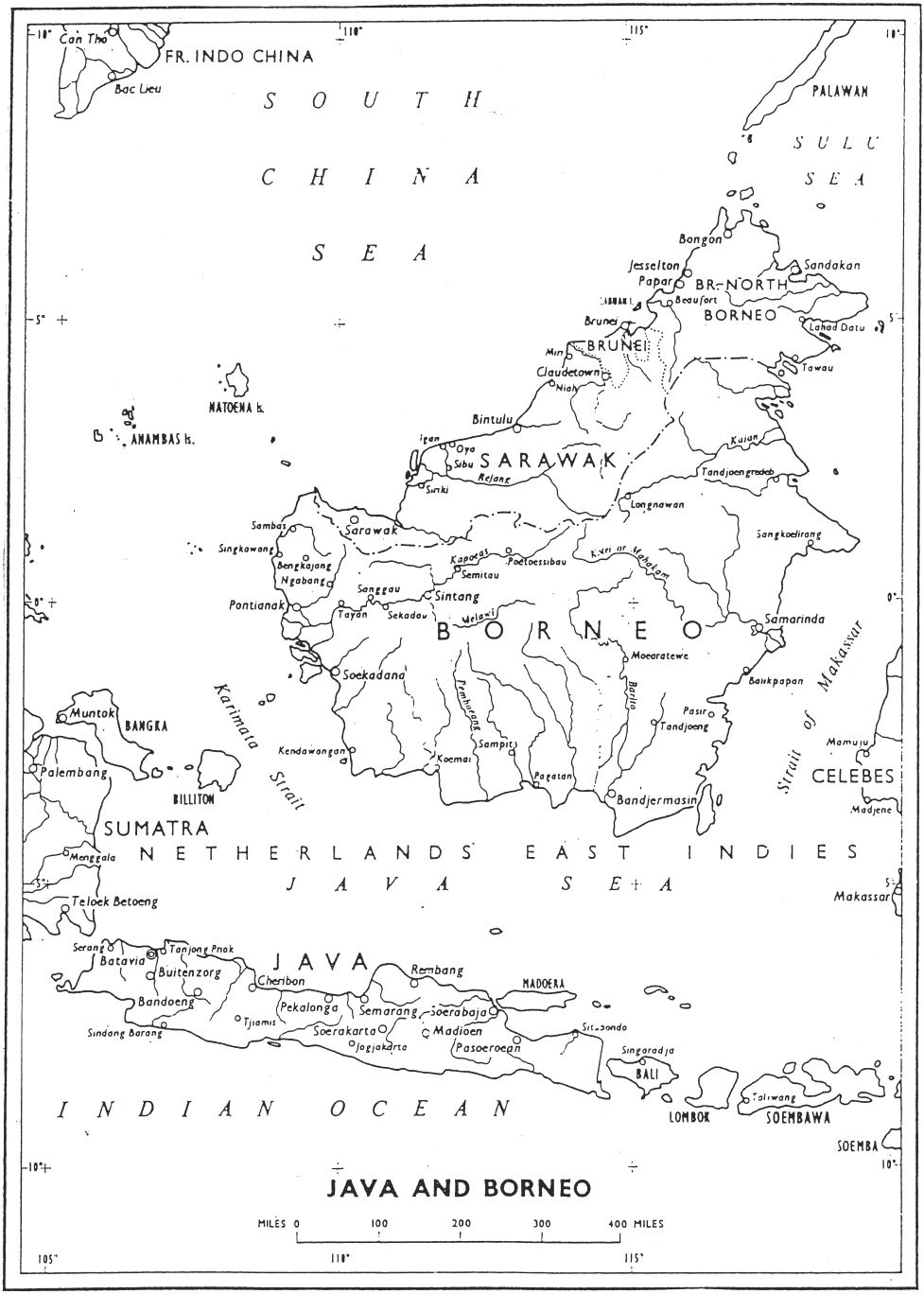
Captain **Wright**. Brigade Transport Officer on the Staff of 9th Indian Infantry Brigade. Interviewed by the author.



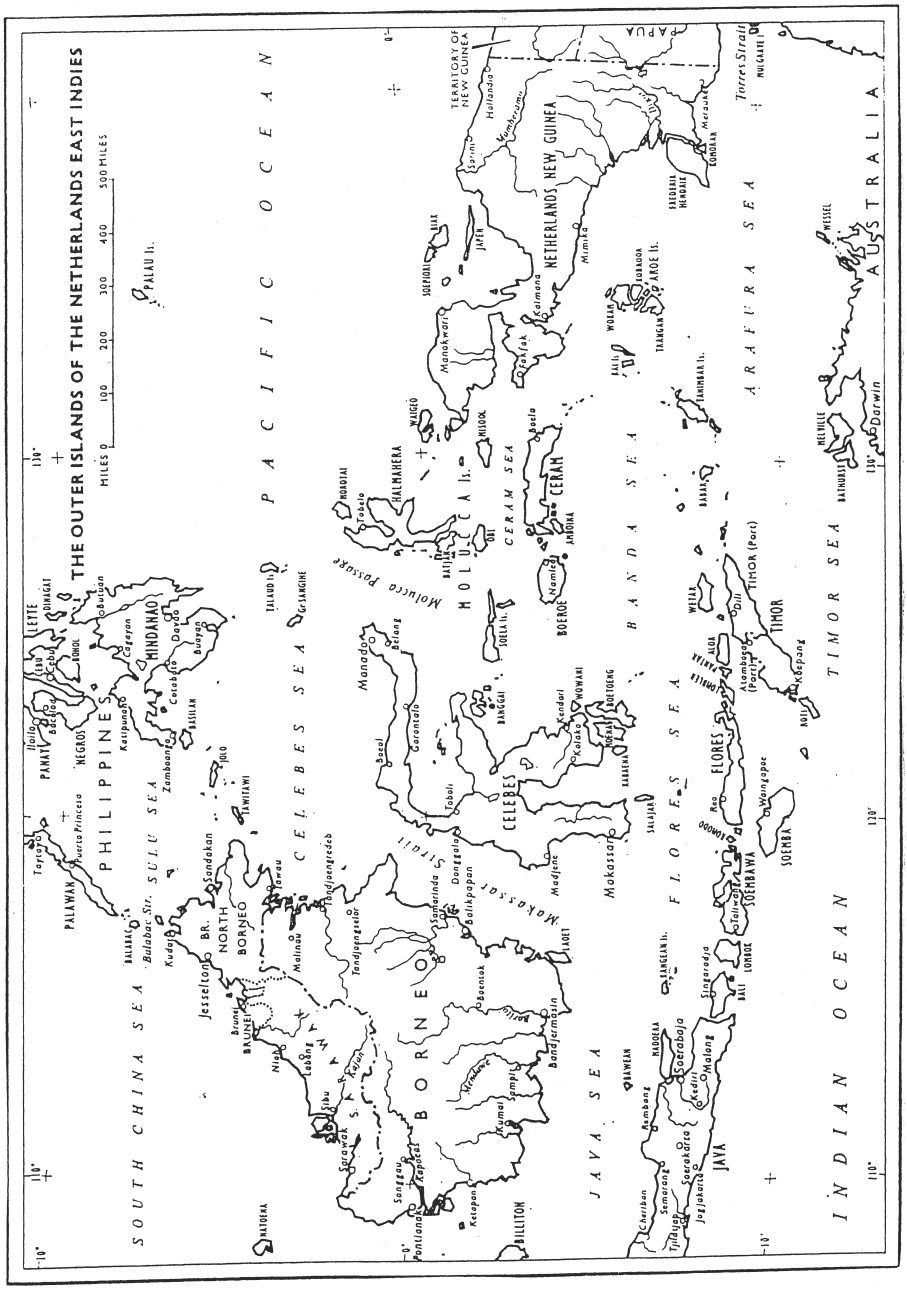
Map 1 Southeast Asia, showing the extension of the boundaries of Southeast Asia Command

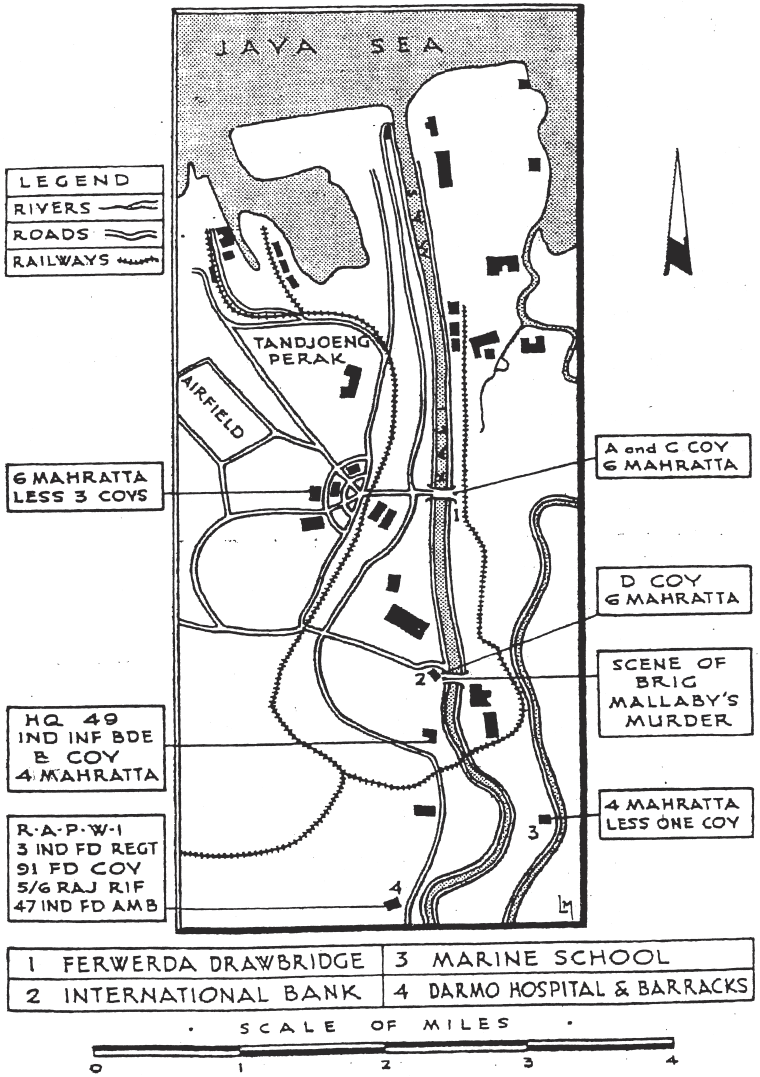


Map 2 Malaya and Sumatra

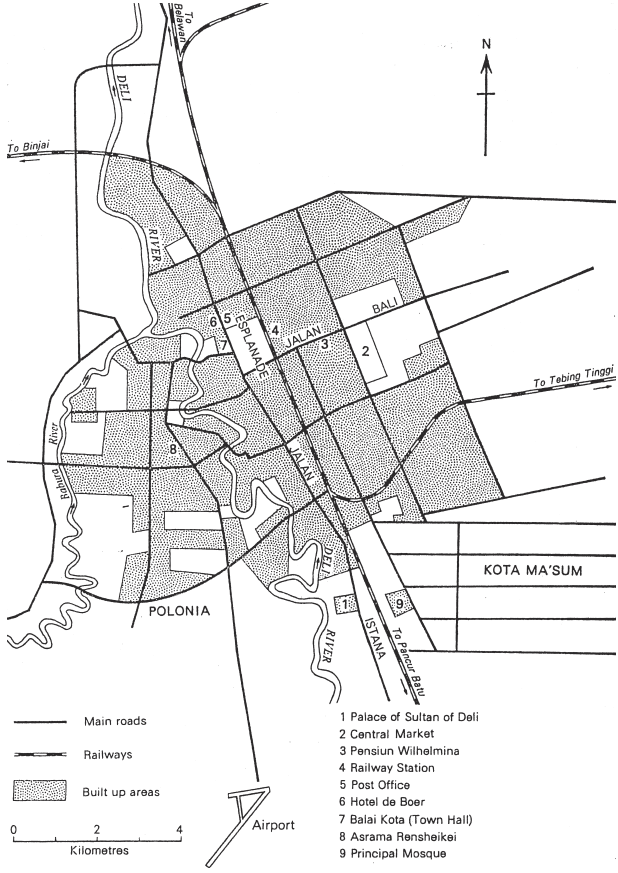


Map 3 Java, Bali, Lombok and Borneo

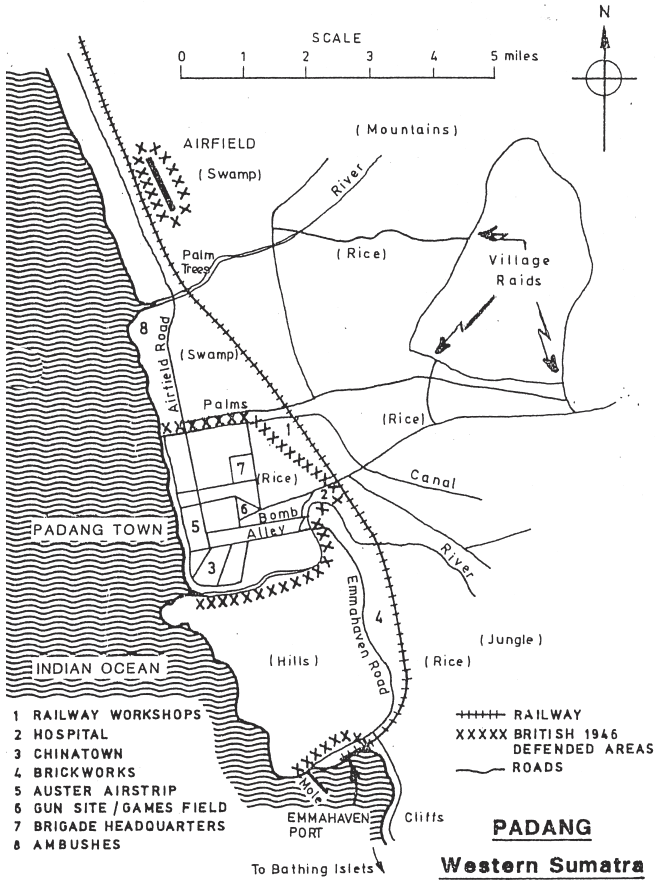

THE OUTER ISLANDS OF THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES
MILES 0 100 200 300 400 500 MILES
SOUTH CHINA SEA
PACIFIC OCEAN
CELEBES SEA
JAVA SEA
FLORES SEA
BANDA SEA
CERAM SEA
ARAFURA SEA
TIMOR SEA
INDIAN OCEAN
AUSTRALIA
PHILIPPINES
BORNEO
CELEBES
JAVA
SUMATRA
NETHERLANDS NEW GUINEA
TERRITORY OF NEW GUINEA
PALAU Is.
MOLUCCA Is.
TIMOR
Jesselton
Sandakan
Kudat
Balabac Str.
Zamboanga
Cotabato
Davao
Buayan
Cagayan
Iligan
Iloilo
Negros
Panay
Leyte
Samar
Surigao
Puerto Princesa
Palawan
Balabac
Tawitawi
Jolo
Basilan
Mindanao
Celebes
Talaud Is.
Gorontalo
Manado
Bolaang
Toli-toli
Donggala
Palopo
Pare-Pare
Makassar
Bonthain
Bulukumba
Bima
Sumbawa
Lombok
Bali
Singaradja
Soerabaja
Djokjakarta
Cheribon
Tjilatjap
Samarang
Batavia
Bandjermasin
Pontianak
Sambas
Sarawak
Kuching
Sibu
Miri
Brunei
Labuan
Tarakan
Malinau
Tandjongselor
Sangau
Ketapan
Billiton
Bangka
Lingga
Riouw
Singapore
Malacca
Penang
Langkawi Is.
Tavoy
Mergui
Moluccas
Halmahera
Waigiu
Obi
Boeroe
Amboina
Ceram
Banda
Timorlaut
Aroe Is.
Tanimbar Is.
Kei Is.
Babar Is.
Wetar
Roti
Savu
Sumba
Flores
Sumbawa
Lombok
Bali
Timor
Koepang
Atamboea (Port)
Dili
Wanoppe
Soemba
Soembawa
Waingapoe
Aroe Is.
Merauke
Frederik Hendrik Is.
Hollandia
Manokwari
Japen
Salawati
Misool
Waigiu
Batanta
Waigeo
Dampier Str.
Torres Strait
Melville
Bathurst
Darwin
Weissel
Mukgare Is.
Kaimana
Fakfak
Ternate
Tidore
Halmahera



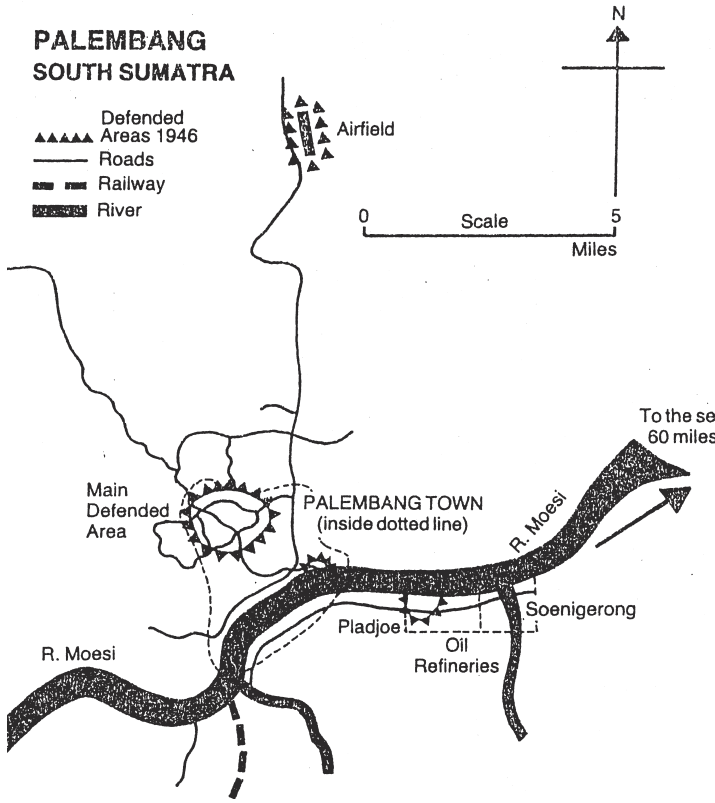
Plan 1 Town plan of Surabaya



Plan 2 Town plan of Medan. (© Anthony Reid.)



Plan 3 Town plan of Padang



Plan 4 Town plan of Palembang

NOTES

Introduction

1 For a history of the Dutch presence in Indonesia, see M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (London: Macmillan, 1981). For a strongly pro-Dutch view of the Dutch presence in Indonesia, see P. S. Gerbrandy, *Indonesia* (London, 1950).

2 For life in the internee camps, see the unpublished memoir by Mrs T. Ellis, 'Hear No Evil…: Childhood Experiences in Captivity and their Lessons in Life', in the Imperial War Museum, London. See also Ernest Hillen, *The Way of a Boy* (London: Penguin, 1995).

3 For the fate of Allied prisoners of war in the Far East, see Major-General Woodburn Kirby *et al*., *The War Against Japan, Volume 5: The Surrender of Japan* (London: HMSO, 1969), Appendix 30; Sybilla Jane Flower, 'British Prisoners of War of the Japanese, 1941–45', in *The History of Anglo–Japanese Relations, 1600–2000, Volume II: The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1931–2000*, edited by Ian Nish and Yoichi Kibata, (London: Macmillan, 2000) and also an unpublished typescript by M. M. Baird, 'Allied Prisoners of War Captured in the Far East and Hong Kong' to be found in CAB 101/199.

4 For conditions in the camps, see 'A Report on RAPWI in JAVA' written by Lieutenant-Colonel F. H. G. Eggleton, in the 1945–46 papers of Major S. Gomme, in the Imperial War Museum, London.

5 'Life and Times of General Sir Philip Christison, Bt.', unpublished memoir held in the Department of Documents of the Imperial War Museum, London, p. 179. Every effort was made to contact the copyright holder but this did not prove possible.

6 For the role of Sukarno during the Japanese occupation of Java, see J. D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (London: Allen Lane, 1972).

7 For a general account of the Japanese occupation of Java, see Theodore Friend, *The Blue-Eyed Enemy: Japan Against the West in Java, 1942–45* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) and Shigeru Sato, *War, Nationalism and Peasants: Java under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–45* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

8 For covert operations in Indonesia and elsewhere in the region, see Charles Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East* (Oxford University Press, 1983).

9 CAB 101/69, letter from F. S. V. Donnison to H. J. Van Mook, 5 October 1951.

10 Amry Vandenbosch, *The Dutch East Indies: Its Government, Problems, and Politics*, (University of California Press, 1944), pp. 1–5.

11 WO 203/2681, 'The Allied Occupation of the Netherlands East Indies: September 1945–November 1946', Appendix L: 'Allied Prisoners of War and Internees on Java'; WO 203/6160, '26th Indian Division in Sumatra, 1945–1946', p. 30.

12 WO 203/2681, 'The Allied Occupation of the Netherlands East Indies', Appendix F: 'Japanese Surrendered Personnel in the Netherlands East Indies'.
13 F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943–46* (London: HMSO, 1956), pp. 415–22.
14 For the text of the proclamation of independence, see George McTurnan Kahin, 'Sukarno's Proclamation of Indonesian Independence' in *Indonesia*, No. 69 (April 2000), pp. 1–3. The text was given to McTurnan Kahin in October 1948 by Haji Agus Salim, the Indonesian Foreign Minister. When the Dutch attacked Yogyakarta in December 1948, their military police arrested McTurnan Kahin and confiscated his papers. They were in due course returned to him, but they had been disordered. He only uncovered the document around 2000 when attempting to write further about his experiences in Indonesia during the revolution.
15 For the proclamation of Indonesian independence and the events and personalities surrounding it, see Benedict Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944–1946* (London: Cornell University Press, 1972).
16 For the response of the Japanese on Java to the Indonesian declaration of independence, see Donnison, *Allied Military Administration in the Far East*, p. 421, and CAB 101/69, 'Extracts from the General Chronology for the East Indies: 1936–1946'.
17 For the condition of Allied prisoners of war and internees at this time, see CAB 101/69, 'General Chronology', Mrs Ellis, 'Hear No Evil', p. 46, and CAB 101/69, 'Proclamation to the allied prisoners of war and civilian internees in Java', issued by the Commander of the Japanese Army in Java on 6 September 1945; for the plans of some of the internees to resume control of government in Java, see Donnison, *Allied Military Administration in the Far East*, p. 422, CAB 101/69, 'General Chronology' and 'Proclamation to all prisoners of war and internees on Java', issued by Mr Spit, Vice-President of the Council of the Netherlands East Indies, Colonel Vroom, Colonel of Infantry, and Mrs C.Tjarda van Starkenborgh Marburg, undated.
18 Donnison, *Allied Military Administration in the Far East*, pp. 424–5, Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, p. 314.
19 For the negotiations between Mountbatten, Slim and Aung San, see *Burma: The Struggle for Independence, 1944–48* (Volume I), edited by Hugh Tinker, (London: HMSO, 1983). Document 262 gives a verbatim report of a meeting held at Mountbatten's Headquarters at Kandy on 6 September 1945.
20 For British plans for post-war Malaya, see A. J. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics During the Malayan Union Experiment, 1942–1948*, (Kuala Lumpur: Council of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1979).
21 For a recent account of India during this period, see Patrick French, *Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division* (London: HarperCollins, 1997). See also Nicholas Mansergh (ed.), *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power, 1942–1947* (12 volumes), (London: HMSO, 1970–83).
22 For the views of Professor Logemann, the Dutch Minister for Overseas Territories in the Schermerhorn Government, see Robert J. McMahon, 'Anglo-American Diplomacy and the Reoccupation of the Netherlands East Indies', 'Diplomatic History: The Journal of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations'.
23 The text of Queen Wilhelmina's radio proclamation can be found on p. 501 of Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*.
24 For Christison's role in the early Anglo–Dutch negotiations and his dismissal in January 1946, see Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, and Peter Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace: Mountbatten and South East Asia Command*, *1945–46* (Manchester University Press, 1987). This latter work has been of considerable use to the present author. It is concerned with the high politics of the British interventions

in Indochina and Indonesia from the time of the surrender of Japan to Mountbatten's departure from South East Asia Command in May 1946.

25 For the life of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, see Donald Gillies, *Radical Diplomat: The Life of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, Lord Inverchapel, 1882–1951* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999); for his role in Dutch–Indonesian negotiations, see Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace*.

26 For Lord Killearn's own account of his mission in Southeast Asia in general and Indonesia in particular, see *British Documents on the End of Empire*, Series B, Volume 3, *Malaya*, edited by A. J. Stockwell, *Part I, the Malayan Union Experiment, 1942–1948* (London: HMSO, 1995), Document 118: CAB 21/1955, F 6151/6151/61 (enclosure), 12 April 1947, 'South East Asia: work of the Special Commission during 1946', despatch No. 119 from Killearn to Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary. Also of considerable interest are the Killearn diaries, held in the Middle East Centre at St. Antony's College, Oxford. These describe in detail Killearn's role in Dutch–Indonesian negotiations in late 1946. Full details of these are to be found in the Bibliography.

27 Older accounts of the Dutch–Indonesian negotiations which led to the initialing of the Linggadjati Agreement are to be found in David Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1948), and Clifford William Squire, *Britain and the Transfer of Power in Indonesia, 1945–46*, Ph.D. thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1979. Both works print the text of the Linggadjati Agreement as appendices. Squire's thesis deals overwhelmingly with the high politics of the British occupation of Indonesia rather than with operations on the ground. More recently, the subject of high politics in general and Linggadjati in particular has been dealt with extensively in Nicholas Tarling, *Britain, Southeast Asia and the Onset of the Cold War, 1945–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

28 Anderson's book has been mentioned already; George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1952).

29 Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945–1950*, (Hong Kong: Longman Australia, 1974); Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

30 Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, p. 164, n. 91.

31 WO 203/2255, situation report up to 11 November 1945. Each situation report in this file usually covers a period of up to 24 hours. The situation report up to 11 November 1945 would have covered events from the early morning of 10 November to the early morning of 11 November.

32 Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, pp. 330–1.

33 Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, p. 352.

34 Reid, *The Blood of the People*, pp. 167–8.

35 These works have already been listed in the notes.

36 Vice-Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, *Post Surrender Tasks: Section E of the Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia, 1943–1945* (London: HMSO, 1969). Sections A–D of the report were published in 1951 but the publication of Section E was vetoed by Foreign Secretary Bevin. The veto on publication was confirmed by the Conservative Government in 1953. In 1959, publication was agreed to, providing passages likely to offend the Dutch were excised. Judging by the inoffensive nature of the final product, it is likely that a great deal of editing had taken place. For information concerning the publication history of Section E, see FO 371/175267 (DH 1051/41).

37 Gerbrandy, *Indonesia*, p. 105.

38 Details of all these sources are to be found in the Bibliography.

1 The arrival of British forces in Indonesia

1 CAB 101/69, letter from Donnison to Van Mook, 5 October 1951.
2 Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, p. 353.
3 CAB 101/69, 'General Chronology'.
4 Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, p. 417.
5 CAB 101/63, 'Indonesia', paper given by B. R. Pearn to Donnison before 1956.
6 Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, pp. 415–22.
7 The text of the Anglo-Dutch Civil Affairs Agreement, entitled 'Principles Covering Arrangements for Civil Administration and Jurisdiction in Netherlands Territory in South East Asia Command', can be found in WO 203/4054.
8 Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, pp. 406–7.
9 WO 203/4054, covering note to the Civil Affairs Agreement from Gibbons to Weijerman, 14 August 1945.
10 WO 203/4054, 'Draft Leaflet to be Dropped Immediately After Japanese Capitulation', sent by Gibbons to Weijerman on 14 August 1945. It is interesting that the term 'Indonesia' should have been used in this leaflet, rather than 'Netherlands East Indies'. 'Indonesia' first came into use as a term at the time of the First World War but was looked on with suspicion by the Indies Government because of its nationalistic connotations.
11 In an appendix to an unpublished account of the British occupation of the Indies in WO 203/2681, it is stated that there were 68,553 'genuine (Potsdam) Allied prisoners of war and internees on Java on 16 September 1945'. Woodburn Kirby, by contrast, on p. 312, n. 5 of *The Surrender of Japan*, states that there were 'over 80,000 internees in Java, of whom most were Dutch; and some 6,078 prisoners of war, of whom about 1,243 were British, 376 were Australian, 330 Indian and 61 American. The rest were Dutch or Indonesian.'
12 'Report by Wing-Commander T. S. Tull on Operation Salex Mastiff Mid-Java: 10th September to 15th December 1945', in the 1945–46 papers of Major S. Gomme in the Imperial War Museum, London, p. 1.
13 Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, p. 313.
14 'A Report on RAPWI in JAVA', written by Lieutenant-Colonel Eggleton, in the Gomme papers, pp. 3–5.
15 Eggleton, 'A Report on RAPWI in JAVA', p. 2; Tull, 'Operation Salex Mastiff', pp. 7–10.
16 Tull, 'Operation Salex Mastiff', pp. 2–11.
17 WO 203/2366, RAPWI Directive, 13 August 1945.
18 Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace*, pp. 77–8.
19 WO 203/2174, intelligence report, 24 August 1945.
20 Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, p. 423.
21 HS 1/268, message sent by the Anglo-Dutch Country Section at Columbo to SEAC HQ at Kandy, 6 September 1945.
22 Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, pp. 423–4.
23 WO 203/1114, ALFSEA Weekly Intelligence Review No. 50 up to 14 September 1945.
24 Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, p. 314.
25 'Life and Times of General Sir Philip Christison', p. 176.
26 WO 203/1114, ALFSEA Weekly Intelligence Review No. 51 up to 21 September 1945.
27 HS 1/268, report sent by Mackenzie to the Director of Intelligence at SEAC HQ, 24 September 1945.
28 Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, pp. 424–5; Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, p. 314.

29 WO 203/1114, ALFSEA Weekly Intelligence Review No. 52 up to 28 September 1945.
30 WO 203/5772, minutes of a meeting held at SEAC HQ on 19 September 1945 to discuss the reorganization of Intelligence Division.
31 Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, p. 314.
32 'Life and Times of General Sir Philip Christison', p. 177.
33 WO 203/2652, translation of a broadcast in Dutch and Malay by C. O. van der Plas made on 30 September 1945. For an account of the career of van der Plas, see William Frederick, 'The Man Who Knew Too Much: Ch. O. van der Plas and the future of Indonesia, 1927–1950', in *Imperial Policy and South East Asian Nationalism*, edited by Hans Antlöv and Stein Tønneson, (Chippenham: Curzon, 1995).
34 'Life and Times of General Sir Philip Christison', pp. 177–8.
35 Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, pp. 319–20.
36 WO 203/2255, situation report up to 6 October 1945.
37 WO 203/2502, 'N.E.I. (JAVA): General situation in Batavia', report dated 13 October 1945.
38 'Life and Times of General Sir Philip Christison', p. 180.
39 WO 203/2255, situation report up to 12 October 1945.
40 WO 172/7660, War Diaries of 1st Seaforth Highlanders, War Diary for October 1945, entries for 2 and 8 October.
41 WO 203/2255, situation report up to 12 October 1945.
42 Unpublished memoir given to the author by Ian Gibb.
43 WO 172/7827, War Diaries of 1st Patialas, War Diary for October 1945, entry for 12 October.
44 Robert Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution, 1945–1949*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), pp. 70–1.
45 Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, pp. 427–8.
46 Ernest Hillen, *The Way of a Boy* (London, 1995), p. 76.
47 C. N. Barclay (ed.), *The Regimental History of the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles, Volume III, 1927–1947* (London: P. Allan, 1953), pp. 190–3.
48 WO 203/2255, situation report up to 17 October for Java and 16 October for Sumatra.
49 Ibid, situation reports up to 24, 25 and 27 October 1945.
50 'Java 1945/46: "Anone, Arimaska – The Cannon Has Fired"', article by Brigadier Gil Hickey in *The Journal of the Officers' Association of 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles*, No. 53 (May 1999), pp. 54–7. Copies of this journal are held in the Gurkha Museum at Winchester.
51 Unpublished memoir, given to the author by Tony Carr, compiled in 1982.
52 WO 203/2255, situation report up to 22 October 1945.
53 Ibid, situation reports up to 30 and 31 October 1945.
54 Ibid, situation reports up to 9, 20, 21, 23 and 30 November 1945.
55 Ibid, situation report up to 25 November 1945.
56 WO 203/2255, situation report up to 1 December 1945.
57 Tull, 'Operation Salex Mastiff', p. 21.
58 Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, pp. 320–1; Tull, 'Operation Salex Mastiff', p. 19; for the information on British casualties, see WO 172/6911, War Diaries of XV Indian Corps, Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies, War Diary for October 1945, HQ AFNEI Intelligence Summary No. 1 up to 28 October 1945.
59 Tull, 'Operation Salex Mastiff', pp. 19–20; WO 203/2255, situation report up to 21 October 1945.
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5 The British occupation of Sumatra

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58 Ibid, WIS No. 47 up to 7 September 1946.
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61 Ibid, p. 233. The author has derived his account of the 'Social Revolution' in Northern Sumatra from this work.
62 Ibid, p. 145, n. 47.
63 WO 172/9893, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS No. 21 up to 9 March 1946.
64 Reid, *The Blood of the People*, p. 235.
65 FO 371/63581, letter from Baron van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout to Sir Neville Bland, 16 January 1947.
66 Reid, *The Blood of the People*, p. 145, n. 47 and pp. 260–1. Queen Juliana succeeded to the Dutch throne on the abdication of her mother, Queen Wilhelmina, on 4 September 1948. Queen Wilhelmina had come to the throne at the age of 10, in 1890. She had seen her country invaded and occupied by Nazi Germany, had presided over the Government-in-exile in London and had witnessed the challenge to Dutch authority in Indonesia. She retired to one of her palaces in the country.
67 Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, p. 335.
68 During the war, SEAC HQ planned a number of offensive operations which were never carried out, largely on account of shortages of landing craft. Operation 'Buccaneer' comprised landings on the Andaman Islands to be launched from India.

Operation 'Culverin' comprised landings on Sabang, an island off the northern tip of Sumatra, to be launched from Akyab in the Arakan. For these plans, and others, see Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten: The Official Biography* (London: Collins, 1985) p. 228.

69 Woodburn Kirby, *The Surrender of Japan*, p. 356; WO 203/6160, '26th Indian Division in Sumatra', p. 30.
70 WO 172/7045, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, 'Secret and Personal' message from Chambers to Tanabe, 5 December 1945.
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74 Interview with Major Koder, 12.6.2000.
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76 Raschen, *Wrong Again Dan!*, pp. 90–1.
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80 WO 203/6160, '26th Indian Division in Sumatra', p. 34.
81 For detailed figures concerning the evacuation of the Japanese, see WO 203/6160, '26th Indian Division in Sumatra', pp. 33–4.
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91 WO 172/10195, War Diaries of 1st Lincolns, War Diaries for May and June 1946.
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100 WO 203/2681, 'Allied Occupation of the Netherlands East Indies', pp. 129–30.
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102 Ibid, p. 159.
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106 WO 203/2681, 'Allied Occupation of the Netherlands East Indies', p. 136.
107 J. N. Mackay, *A History of the Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles, Volume III, 1938–1948* (London, 1952), p. 484.
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6 Morale

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15 This information is contained in the papers of A. J. F. Doulton in the National Army Museum, London.
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19 Interview with Major Gibb, 3.7.2000.
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55 Ibid, item 135.
56 Ibid, item 140.
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59 Ibid, item 206.
60 Ibid, item 256.
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62 Ibid, item 296.
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65 Ibid, item 357.
66 Ibid, item 371.
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68 Interview with Colonel Harrington, 10.11.2000.
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91 Pugh, 'Soerabaja', p. 43.
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100 WO 203/6160, '26th Indian Division in Sumatra', pp. 35–6.
101 WO 203/2645, 'HQ AFNEI Intelligence Review Period Oct '45–Nov '46', Appendix A: 'Deserters Indian Troops'.
102 See WO 172/10249, War Diaries of 6/8th Punjab and WO 172/10250, War Diaries of 8/8th Punjab.
103 WO 172/10250, War Diaries of 8/8th Punjab, War Diary for September 1946.
104 See the War Diaries for the two battalions for October 1946.
105 The War Diaries of 4/7th Rajputs are contained in WO 172/7717 and WO 172/10244. The information about the religious composition of the battalion was gained from correspondence with one of its officers, Major Ramplin. Letter from Major Ramplin to the author, 23.7.2000.
106 The War Diaries of 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles are contained in WO 172/7740 and WO 172/10268.
107 WO 172/7045, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, War Diary for November 1945, 'GOC's' Conference at Medan on 20 Nov '45'.
108 Interview with Major Henstock, 6.7.2000. The communal disturbances which attended the British withdrawal from India are chronicled by Sumit Sarkar in *Modern India: 1885–1947* and by Patrick French in *Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division* (London: HarperCollins, 1997).
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110 Ibid, WIS No. 15 up to 27 February 1946.
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120 WO 203/6160, '26th Indian Division in Sumatra', pp. 35–6.
121 WO 172/10250, War Diaries of 8/8th Punjab, War Diary for April 1946.
122 WO 172/9894, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS up to 3 August 1946.
123 WO 172/9878, War Diaries of 23rd Indian Division, WIS No. 16 up to 6 March 1946.
124 Ibid, WIS No. 18 up to 20 March 1946.
125 Ibid, WIS No. 16 up to 6 March 1946 and WIS No. 18 up to 20 March 1946.
126 WO 172/9878, War Diaries of 23rd Indian Division, WIS No. 17 up to 13 March 1946.
127 WO 172/9893, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS No. 23 up to 23 March 1946, Part I.
128 WO 172/9893, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS No. 23 up to 23 March 1946, Appendix B: Indonesian propaganda leaflet directed at Indian troops in Palembang.
129 WO 172/9909, War Diaries of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, War Diary for June 1946, entry for 12June.
130 WO 172/9879, War Diaries of 23rd Indian Division, WIS No. 30 up to 12 June 1946.
131 WO 203/2645, 'HQ AFNEI Intelligence Review Period Oct '45–Nov '46', Appendix A: 'Deserters Indian Troops'.
132 WO 172/9909, War Diaries of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, WIS up to 8 May 1946.
133 WO 172/9880, War Diaries of 23rd Indian Division, WIS No. 34 up to 10 July 1946.
134 WO 172/9878, War Diaries of 23rd Indian Division, WIS No. 26 up to 15 May 1946.
135 WO 172/9893, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS No. 18 up to 16 February 1946, Part II.
136 WO 172/9909, War Diaries of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, WIS up to 8 May 1946.
137 WO 172/9878, War Diaries of 23rd Indian Division, WIS No. 18 up to 20 March 1946.
138 WO 172/9894, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS No. 40 up to 20 July 1946.
139 The Volksfront was modelled on the Persatuan Perdjuangan on Java. It was established in March 1946. See Audrey Kahin, 'West Sumatra: Outpost of the Republic', in Audrey Kahin (ed.), *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution: Unity from Diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985).
140 WO 172/9894, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS No. 40 up to 20 July 1946 and WIS No. 42 up to 3 August 1946. According to the 1930 census, there were 1,234,000 Chinese in the Netherlands East Indies. Amry Vandenbosch, who quotes the census figures, said that there were 71,000 'Arabians' and that the 'next most numerous groups among the Other Foreign Asiatics [a category in the census] are the British Indians and Ceylonese'. See Vandenbosch, *The Dutch East Indies*, pp. 10–11.
141 WO 172/9909, War Diaries of 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, War Diary for June 1946, entry for 20 June.
142 WO 172/9894, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS No. 49 up to 21 September 1946.
143 WO 172/9893, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS No. 21 up to 9 March 1946, Appendix B, 'Factors Affecting the Desertion of IORs'.
144 'Jawan' is Urdu for 'young man'. It is another term for 'sepoy'.

145 WO 172/9893, War Diaries of 26th Indian Division, WIS No. 24 up to 30 March 1946.
146 WO 172/9879, War Diaries of 23rd Indian Division, WIS No. 30 up to 12 June 1946, Appendix D, 'Report from an Officer who Organised a Search in BATAVIA for Missing IORs'.

Conclusion

1 The Killearn Diaries, entry for 15 November 1946 (p. 333).
2 FO 371/53837, text of a question asked in the House of Commons by Mr Stephen of Mr Dalton, Chancellor of the Exchequer, on 17 December 1946.
3 Interview with Captain Wright held on 8.10.1999.
4 Mountbatten, *Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff*, pp. 294–5.
5 FO 371/175267 (DH 1051/41), letter from Gilchrist to Butler, 5 February 1964.
6 Interview with Captain Taylor held on 14.2.2002.
7 Pat Davis, 'Java 1946 – Some Personal Notes', in *Red Flash* (Journal of the 8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association (UK)), Number 16 (March 1993), pp. 8–10.
8 The text of the Linggadjati Agreement can be found printed as an appendix in a number of secondary works, such as David Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia*, and P. S. Gerbrandy, *Indonesia*.

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Richard McMillan received his Ph.D. in History from Royal Holloway, University of London. He is currently teaching History and Government and Politics at Lansdowne College, London, and Imperial History at Royal Holloway, University of London.

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ISBN 0-415-35551-6
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